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THE HISTORY OF GREAT BRITAIN

DURING THE REIGN OF QUEEN ANNE.

VOL. II.

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THE

HISTORY OF GREAT BRITAIN

DURING

THE REIGN OF QUEEN ANNE.

BY

FREDERICK WILLIAM WYON.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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LONDON:
CHAPMAN AND HALL, 193, PICCADILLY.
1876.

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LONDON:
PRINTED BY VIRTUE AND CO., LIMITED,
CITY ROAD.

The author regrets that through inadvertency it was omitted to place the date of the year at the top of each page. These dates should be as follows:—

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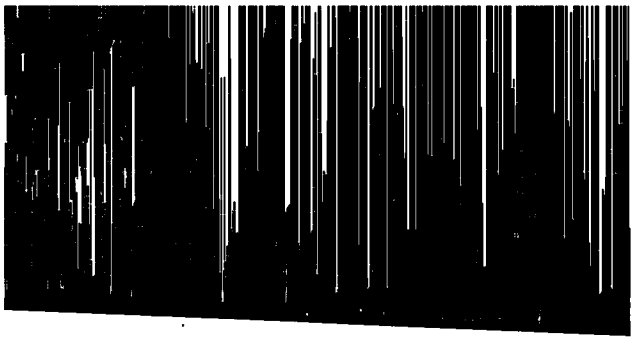

HISTORY OF GREAT BRITAIN

DURING THE

REIGN OF QUEEN ANNE.

CHAPTER I.

MEANWHILE the business of the Lower House had proceeded with a tranquillity in striking contrast to the virulent displays of party feeling which had been exhibited by the Lords. The jealous spirit which prompted Somers and Wharton to attack their best friends, the Ministers, was but little shared by their followers in the Commons. Before the end of the year all the more important resolutions about supplies had been passed; and Godolphin and Marlborough had every reason to be satisfied with the liberality of the House. The sums granted for carrying on the war amounted to nearly six millions sterling. That the Tories, as a body, disapproved of the enormous expenditure upon land forces, there seems good grounds for believing, and in the present House they were at least as numerous as the Whigs; but they were content to keep their objections to themselves, and voted the public money as cheerfully as their rivals. The explanation of this supineness may be that the Tories of lower rank were men of less independent ideas than the chiefs of the party. Rochester, Nottingham, Haversham, were free and outspoken in their opposition, without a care as to what were the personal feelings or opinions of the sovereign. Their followers seem to have

adopted the personal inclinations of the sovereign, whenever they could be ascertained, as the guide of their political conduct; and nothing had as yet transpired to breed a doubt as to the sincerity of Anne's periodical recommendations to prosecute the war with vigour. Upon another matter the Commons were eager to please her. It was easy to surmise that an inquiry into the abuses of an establishment of which Prince George was the head, would be distasteful. The memorial of the merchants met in consequence with but little favour in the Lower House. The witnesses for the petitioners were constantly made to feel that those before whom they were urging their case were less desirous to get at the truth than to ensnare them into contradictions. The inquiry would, in all probability, have been abandoned, had it been safe to adopt this course. But the mismanagement of the Council had excited indignation too deep and universal to be disregarded. A compromise was therefore arrived at by which some degree of justice should be measured out to the petitioners, without offending the Queen. No censure was passed upon the Council; but an Act was passed to render it in future obligatory upon those who had the direction of the navy to keep forty-three ships of war continually cruising about the coasts of Great Britain.*

Much time was spent in endeavouring to adjust certain difficulties of a temporary nature which arose out of the relations of this country with Scotland. The Union had been welcomed by all classes of the English with a satisfaction in striking contrast to the sullen rage with which the treaty was regarded in that part of her Majesty's dominions which seemed most likely to be the greatest gainer by it. Queensberry had been glad, as soon as he was able to prorogue the Scottish Parliament, to quit a country where he could not show himself without being hooted and pelted, and to hasten up to London. The moment he crossed the border, the manners of the populace towards him underwent an agreeable change. All along the northern road the people turned out to greet the Minister, whose cool intrepidity and address had succeeded, in the face of the most determined spite and fury, in carrying through a measure eminently calculated to promote the welfare and pros-

* Parliamentary History; Burnet; Boyer; Lettres Historiques.

perity of two nations. The magistrates were waiting at the gate of every large town to conduct the distinguished guest to his lodgings. A circumstance still more demonstrative of the turn English feeling had taken was the marks of friendliness which persons of all ranks delighted in paying to the numerous Scotchmen who accompanied Queensberry. For the first time since the two kingdoms had been brought under one Crown, the natives of the northern part of the island found that a Scottish face and a Scottish accent could be seen and heard without provoking insult. The Commissioner's entry into London resembled a triumphal procession. The road from Barnet to Highgate was covered by the coaches of the nobility and by gentlemen on horseback. All the Whig peers, all the members of the House of Commons who had voted for the Union, assembled to do honour to the man who had brought the project safely through so many dangers.* Since the Act of ratification passed, Anne had been overwhelmed with addresses from almost every corporation in England, complimenting her in loyal strains upon having performed a work so difficult that it had been the glory of her predecessors merely to attempt it.† It was ordered by proclamation that the 1st of May, the day from which the Union was to commence, should be observed as a day of public thanksgiving, and throughout England the rejoicings were in full accordance with this order. Once more the Londoners had an opportunity of witnessing the pageant, now grown familiar, of the sovereign repairing in state to St. Paul's, to return thanks for the signal mercies of Providence. The text from which the Bishop of Oxford preached was the very appropriate one from the Psalms, "Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" In Scotland, on the other hand, the day from which it was destined that the country should enter on a career of prosperity almost as brilliant as that predicted for it by such seers as Law and Chamberlayne, was, by the care of the clergy, kept as a day of national mourning with the object of propitiating an incensed God, who must surely have inflicted the

* Boyer.

† London Gazette; Lettres Historiques; Boyer. The University of Oxford distinguished itself by its silence on this occasion.

Union upon the Scottish people as a just punishment for their sins.*

The difficulties which now engaged the attention of both Houses, were brought on by the eagerness of sharp traders, not only in England and Scotland, but even upon the Continent, to take advantage of an unguarded point in the treaty of Union. It had been agreed that, until the 1st of May, each kingdom should retain its existing scale of customs; but that, after that period the English scale should be extended to Scotland. The existing Scottish customs on wine, spirits and other foreign productions were trifling in comparison with the heavy tax demanded in England. An importer, therefore, of commodities, ultimately designed for the English market, if he wished to obtain a cargo at the lighter rates, had but to direct its shipment to a Scottish instead of to an English port. The cargo would be landed, after payment of the Scottish customs, might remain in Scotland until the Union, and might then be brought free into England. There was, moreover, another way in which money could be made with little difficulty and no risk whatever. Under certain statutes any person who sent tobacco, pepper, and some other descriptions of colonial produce into Scotland, was allowed a drawback of sixpence in the pound upon the duties he had paid when they were landed in England. It was an easy thing for a merchant, who had on hand a stock of such commodities, to pass them into Scotland before the 1st of May, to pocket the drawback, and then to bring them back into England as soon as the Union had commenced.

Such being the state of the case, it is not strange that, from the moment the news was received that the Union had passed the Scottish Parliament, the smaller fry of traders should have been everywhere on the alert. An amount of business quite unprecedented was during three months transacted in the seaports of Scotland. Ships were arriving every day from France with cargoes of wines and silks; coffee and spices, luxuries which never could have been intended for the markets of an impoverished people, were set on shore from Holland; while tobacco, in most unusual quantities, kept the officers of the custom-houses on the border continually employed in refunding

* Boyer.

the drawback.* At length the more respectable members of the trading community, too honourable to stoop to such sources of profit themselves, yet infuriated at the gains which their less scrupulous brethren were making, petitioned for the interference of Parliament on the grounds that, not only did these transactions inflict serious losses upon themselves, but that the public revenue would be materially affected. The Commons responded by passing resolutions denouncing the practices complained of, and by ordering a bill to be brought in to rectify the evil. The main provision of that bill was that, even after the commencement of the Union, goods passing from Scotland into England should be liable to duty, unless it could be proved that they were in Scotland before the 1st of February, or had been imported into that kingdom after the 1st of May. It is no slight evidence of the superior wisdom of the Peers that this bill, which passed the Lower House, was rejected in the Upper by a great majority. It was pointed out that the remedy was far more mischievous than the evil. To disappoint a few cunning men who hoped to derive profits at the expense of the revenue, would be no doubt an advantage; but it would be an advantage dearly purchased by legislation which was in itself an infraction of the treaty, which would necessitate the continuance of the custom-houses on the border, and keep the subjects of the two kingdoms wrangling with each other for some time to come.

But another point speedily arose which, but for the liberal spirit which the Parliament was disposed to apply to all matters in issue with Scotland, might have excited a fearful outcry among a people jealously on the watch for subject of offence. The kingdom of Great Britain was scarcely a month old before a fleet of forty sail came crowding into the Thames from the northern ports. The ships were boarded by the officers of the Custom House. Each skipper was prepared to show that his cargo had been landed in Scotland before the date of the Union, that he had brought it directly from thence; and so far his right to set the goods on shore without any further payment of duty was clear. But the officers saw that a great portion of the cargoes consisted of articles which, since the

* Defoe, History of the Union; Boyer; Lettres Historiques; Burnet.

prohibition of trade with France, were contraband in this country, and conceived it to be their duty to take possession of the ships. The matter was laid before the Privy Council. The board thought it prudent to resort to a decision of the Parliament. Prosecutions were instituted against the owners of the vessels, who were, however, permitted, upon giving security, to land the cargoes. The judgment of the Commons was a marked indication of their wish to soothe and conciliate the people of the north by a large and liberal construction of the terms of the treaty. It was unanimously agreed to request her Majesty that she would instruct her law officers to desist from al further proceedings in regard to these ships.*

Some further legislation was resorted to with the view of rendering the Union more complete. Those two famous Acts, the Act of Security and the Act anent peace and war, in which the hostile feelings of Scotland against England had formerly found vent, it was thought advisable to repeal by an express enactment. But another subject upon which it was necessary to adjudicate aroused strong passions. A bill was introduced to abolish the Privy Council of Scotland, and to assimilate the powers of justices of the peace in that kingdom to those possessed by English justices. The measure met with opposition in the Lower House, and was encountered with still greater determination when it was sent up to the Lords. The arguments for retaining the Privy Council were indeed not contemptible. While the kingdom was full of disaffection, while the agents of France and of the Pretender were passing busily from one nobleman's house to another's, while tidings might each day be brought of an insurrection of the Cameronians or the Highlanders, it was surely for the public advantage that a commission should always be on the spot, armed with the fullest powers, and upon the fidelity of whose members the Government at home could implicitly depend. Nor was there the certainty that, if the powers now exercised by the Privy Council were suddenly transferred to justices of the peace, those persons would comprehend them sufficiently to discharge their duties. Nay, it might be found impossible to obtain the requisite number of gentlemen whose fidelity to the existing

* Boyer; Lettres Historiques.

Government was beyond suspicion. But strong as were these arguments, they failed to convince the majority of the Peers. The bare mention of the Privy Council of Scotland was sufficient to excite in most minds an unconquerable desire to abolish its existence. It was impossible to forget that that institution had been, ever since the days of the infamous Cabal, the convenient instrument of tyranny in the hands either of wicked and corrupt ministers or of a cruel sovereign. It had been constantly instigated to ruin, torture, and murder God's creatures, and had performed its iniquitous tasks with apparent delight. Was it not, therefore, advisable that an institution, whose past history was a reproach to England, and upon whose deeds Scotland could not think without indignation, should be swept away, whatever temporary disadvantage its loss might occasion? Cowper, Somers, Halifax, Sunderland, all spoke on this side, but the bill was carried by a majority of only five votes.* In the opinion of Godolphin, the services of the Council were too valuable to be dispensed with at so critical a time. It is possible, however, that his judgment may have been biassed by reflecting upon the assistance its members might afford to the Government in Parliamentary elections.

From the consideration of these weighty affairs it becomes necessary to pass to a consideration of the state of mind of that august lady upon whose prejudices, religious and political, depended in large measure the future of most European commonwealths. Seldom or never has a sovereign of this country occupied so proud a position in the community of nations as Anne. She was the real chief of the most formidable confederacy that had ever yet been organized against France. The armies of that confederacy were inspirited by almost unvarying success, and were directed by a man who, if not the greatest military genius, was the most reliable commander the world had seen for centuries. There can be little doubt that the war, notwithstanding the inconvenience to trade, the high prices, and heavy taxation which it occasioned, was popular with the great majority of the English people. So great was already the exhaustion and distress of France, that nothing but a steady determination on the part of the English sovereign

* Boyer; Lettres Historiques.

to uphold her existing Ministers, and to bestow the chief share of her favour on that party of the state which was heartily disposed to second the efforts of those Ministers, seemed requisite to insure the speedy and permanent humiliation of a kingdom which had been for more than a hundred years the firebrand of Europe. There have been female sovereigns under whose vigorous administration nations have risen to the height of military fame. But Anne was not a Semiramis nor a Catherine of Russia. She was merely a pious lady, who had far more at heart the welfare of her Church than the glory of her arms.

Marlborough had, upon his return home, been disagreeably impressed with the alteration he perceived in the Queen's demeanour towards him. There was no longer room for doubt that the affectionate feelings which Mrs. Morley had entertained for thirty years towards Mr. and Mrs. Freeman had entirely disappeared, and that a feeling of sullen discontent supplied their place. But there was work to be performed, which, whatever might be its effect to increase Anne's ill-humour, could not be left undone. It was plainly necessary for the contentation of the most powerful party in the Parliament that some substantial marks of favour should be offered to the Whigs. It was also obvious that while a counsellor like Harley had access to her Majesty, there was little chance of curing her inveteracy against that faction which it was essential to conciliate. For some time, however, Anne turned a deaf ear to all complaints about Harley, and was utterly impervious to all arguments about the necessity of satisfying the Whigs. Marlborough's threats of resigning at length overcame her obstinacy upon the latter point. She consented that one Whig doctor named Trimnel should be raised to the see of Norwich, and that another named Potter should be made Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford. She even went so far as to authorise the Dukes of Devonshire and Somerset to inform the Whig leaders privately that, although she could not draw back from her word to the two Tory clergymen to whom she had promised the sees of Exeter and Chester, they should have more reason in future to be satisfied with her appointments.* This assur-

* Burnet.

ance the Whig leaders considered satisfactory. Its effect upon their conduct in Parliament was marked and salutary; but Marlborough and Godolphin felt that there could be no security against her Majesty's relapse into obstinacy, unless Harley were divested of all right of speaking to her as a counsellor. His dismissal from the secretaryship therefore they determined, at all cost to themselves, to extort from the Queen.

Whether they possessed any positive proofs of Harley's treachery it is impossible to state; but that the evidence, to whatever it may have amounted, was principally furnished by Harley's arch-enemy, the Duchess, there can be no doubt. As for many years past there had been no servant appointed in the palace except upon her recommendation, the household must have swarmed with her creatures. The music parties which Mrs. Masham gave in her rooms, and which Anne sometimes honoured with her presence, the attendance of the Secretary at those meetings, and the long conversations with which he was on those occasions indulged by her Majesty were all matters faithfully reported to the falling favourite. Harley, upon his side, seems, with all his cunning, never to have contracted a suspicion that his actions were observed by unfriendly eyes. He still professed his astonishment at the wickedness of the talebearers who accused him. But it was not his patrons alone who suspected his treachery. There was a common rumour that the Secretary was engaged in a clever intrigue to turn out the Lord Treasurer, and to put a staunch Tory into his office, that the Queen had admitted to St. John her intention of parting with the Lord Treasurer, and had given him liberty to publish the information to whom he would.* There was great excitement, not only in political, but in commercial circles; for upon the wisdom and probity with which Godolphin managed the finances the fund-holders relied as a necessary part of their security. The principal Whigs, in great alarm, made haste to convey to Marlborough and the Treasurer the strongest assurances of their support. Just at the end of the year, and while the town was at the height of expectation, a somewhat remarkable incident occurred.

* Swift to Archbishop King, February 12—23, 1708. He says, "Though his (Harley's) project has miscarried, it is reckoned the greatest piece of court skill that has been acted these many years."

Intelligence came from the postmaster at Brussels that, having conceived some suspicions about a packet addressed to the French Minister, Chamillart, but which purported to come from the Secretary's office in England, he had opened it, and found it to contain copies of a number of important State papers. It appeared by a letter, also addressed to the French Minister, that the person who sent these copies was William Gregg. Gregg, who was an under clerk in Harley's office, was immediately arrested. Upon examination he admitted that, pressed by poverty and debt, he had endeavoured to raise money by selling information to France; but he swore positively that he had no participator in his crime. He had taken the opportunity, he confessed, of a private letter, which was addressed by the prisoner of war, Marshal Tallard, to Chamillart, and which had been submitted to him for examination before it went abroad, to seal up with it his own inclosures. His evidence afforded a glimpse of the method in which business was transacted in the Secretary's office. The most entire confidence reigned apparently between the careless chief and the humblest and most necessitous of his clerks. The rough drafts of letters of the highest moment which Godolphin sent to the office to be transcribed for the Queen's signature, would lie on the desks open to the inspection of every clerk, messenger, or laundress in the establishment, until somebody had leisure to take the work in hand. The books in which these letters were afterwards copied were never locked up. They lay in the presses, the keys of the presses remained in the locks, and any person in the office might consult them if he had the curiosity. All the secrets of State, the plans of campaigns, the projected descents upon the enemy's coasts, the negotiations with foreign Powers, the times assigned for the sailing of merchant fleets, the strength of their convoys, were confided to the honour of a set of clerks striving to keep body and soul together upon a not very regularly paid salary of fifty pounds a year.

Gregg had not been long in Newgate when two men named Vallière and Barra were also brought in, upon the charge of being spies in the employ of France. Vallière was a French wigmaker; Barra, a Piedmontese by birth, had been secretary to the Savoyard Embassy; but both men had been for some

time engaged in a much more lucrative occupation than wig-making or corresponding. A sort of compact appears to have existed between them and Harley, under which they were bound to furnish such information as they could collect about French affairs, while the English Government, on its side, was to shut its eyes to a little smuggling they designed to carry on. Thus protected, Vallière and Barra drove a splendid trade between Dover and Calais, by going over with wool and returning with brandy. The news they supplied in exchange for their valuable concession amounted to very little; and Harley, it seems, was too much absorbed in other business to pay much attention to what they did bring. To secure their trade on the opposite coast, they had, of course, entered into the same relations with the French as with the English Government; and there are grounds for believing that the French Ministers, less preoccupied than Harley about their private concerns, held the scoundrels more strictly to their bargain. The suspicion was rife throughout our south-eastern coast that the singularly accurate information which the French Government unquestionably possessed touching the times for sailing of our merchant fleets was principally derived from Vallière and Barra. So vehement did the outcry at length become that the Mayor of Dover took upon himself to arrest and send these men up to London. They were examined by the Privy Council, but would confess nothing. Clear evidence against them it was impossible to obtain; and the Government, therefore, perhaps not altogether desirous of publishing transactions in which it could scarcely hope to figure at advantage, discharged them with a caution as to their behaviour in future.

Meanwhile Gregg had pleaded guilty to his indictment at the Old Bailey, and had been sentenced to death. The Whig leaders, eager to obtain matter against Harley, were in great hopes that the unfortunate man would say something to fix his chief with complicity in his crime. The House of Lords, in which their influence was supreme, was easily induced to enter upon a searching investigation of the affair. A committee was appointed, and consisted of seven of the principal Whigs. The committee went to Newgate for the purpose of examining the prisoner, whose execution was respited. Gregg was plainly

told that if he would make a full confession, he might hope for the intercession of the House. It was impossible for the poor fellow to mistake the drift of his examiners; but in spite of the temptation held out to him, he adhered manfully and honourably to the truth of his first statement that no one had been privy to his crime, and that his only inducement in committing it had been his pecuniary necessities. The committee had the cruelty to keep the culprit hovering between life and death for nearly three months. At length, in bitter disappointment at making no other discovery than that the business of the Secretary's office was conducted with considerable laxity, they sent up to the Queen a recommendation that the execution should take place. Gregg was accordingly hanged at Tyburn on the 28th of April. Before he was turned off he delivered a paper to the sheriff, in which he solemnly exculpated Harley from all participation in the offence for which he suffered.*

The cruelty of the Whigs in keeping Gregg suspended over the grave for more than three months, was the more flagrant from the circumstance that long before his execution, Anne had been awakened to the impossibility of retaining Harley in her service without throwing her affairs into utter confusion. It had become necessary that this matter should be brought to a speedy conclusion, inasmuch as the time Marlborough could remain in England was drawing to a close, and Godolphin might well despair of effecting anything in his absence. Harley clung desperately to his post. He waited on Marlborough, and implored to be informed in what particular he had offended. He wrote to Godolphin, and protested that he had never harboured a thought prejudicial to his interest. The Treasurer's reply was brief and mournful, and seemingly imports that evidence of an unquestionable character as to Harley's schemes had reached him: "I am sorry to have lost the good opinion I once had of you; but I must believe my own senses. I am very far from having deserved this of you. May God forgive you for it!" The two friends, shortly after the date of this letter, repaired to Anne, and made a joint request that the

* Three pamphlets concerning Gregg are among the Somers tracts. Howell's State Trials; Burnet; Boyer; Lettres Historiques. Oldmixon's History.

Secretary should be dismissed. A scene of strange interest ensued, and was prolonged for more than a week. The poor conscience-stricken lady clung with the same tenacity to the sanctimonious Minister, as a Roman Catholic penitent clings to the saving merits of his saint. In Harley, there can be no reasonable doubt, she had, during the two past years, reposed all her hopes of deliverance from the meshes of sin in which the ambition of the Whigs and the treachery of her former friends had involved her. She had therefore made up her mind not to part with so precious a servant. Unfortunately, however, for her, the more she evinced her partiality for the Secretary, the more necessary did it appear to Marlborough and Godolphin that the Secretary should be debarred from access to her. Her Majesty's intellect, it seemed, was impervious to mere argument and persuasion. Recourse, therefore, must be had to an expedient by which powerful Ministers have more than once obtained their own way in the face of the likings and dislikings of feeble sovereigns. Each of the friends wrote separately to the Queen, and tendered his resignation. The letter of Marlborough was supervised and corrected by Godolphin. The united acquirements of the two were indeed insufficient to render the composition grammatical; but it was to be perused by no hypercritical reader, and was at least forcible and to the point. The writer deplored that his endeavours to convince her Majesty of the false and treacherous proceedings of Mr. Secretary Harley should have been so fruitless. He was very sure that her persistence in countenancing him would be regarded with sorrow and amazement throughout Europe. But so much regard to his own reputation he must have as to decline to be made every day a sacrifice to falsehood and treachery. No consideration should induce him to serve any longer with that man. Her Majesty must look upon him, from that moment, as forced out of her service, while she thought fit to continue the Secretary in it.

Of neither of these letters did the Queen take the slightest notice. The prospect of being delivered from the thraldom of Mr. Montgomery, she, no doubt, regarded as an unmixed blessing. But a threat of resignation from so necessary a servant as

Mr. Freeman might well appal the most stout-hearted sovereign. It is probable, however, that she understood his character too well to feel any fear that he would carry his threat into execution. He would surely think twice before he renounced the conduct of a war which had raised him to the pinnacle of glory and popularity, and posts that were bringing him in £50,000 a year. The two friends were compelled therefore to wait upon the Queen again, and tender their resignations in person. To Godolphin she listened with an air of unconcern, which imported plainly that he was at liberty to act as he thought proper. Marlborough she entreated to reconsider his determination. But upon the matter in dispute she would not give way; and the friends retired to await what the result might be. A Privy Council had been summoned for that afternoon, the 9th of February. Upon the support of a majority of the Members they might rely with perfect security, for the Whigs were now fully alive to the dangers that threatened them from the side of Harley, and even the more prudent Tories would shrink from involving the Queen in such unpopularity as she would be certain to incur, if the Commander-in-Chief should relinquish her service on the grounds that her Majesty thought proper to bestow her confidence upon his enemy. They absented themselves, therefore, from the Council, and left their interests in the hands of their friends. Harley attempted to open the business of the meeting. He was interrupted by the Duke of Somerset: "I do not see," his Grace remarked, "how we can deliberate in the absence of the Commander-in-Chief and the Lord Treasurer." The other members of the Council remained silent, the abashed Secretary found in their countenances no encouragement to proceed, and the Queen, wretched and almost in tears, rose and withdrew from the room.

The following day was one of great excitement. Anne persisted in her resolution with all that recklessness of consequences which characterized her father. Rumours that some sweeping changes were about to be made in the Ministry filled the air, and the Tory place-hunters trooped to Kensington to pay their compliments. In the city, on the other hand, where Godolphin's financial abilities were highly esteemed, and in all Whig circles,

where he was regarded as a necessary assistant in that war upon the issue of which the freedom and security of the country were imagined to depend, there was great consternation. The House of Commons, in which his admirers mustered in strength, permitted a bill of supply which was ordered for that day to lie upon the table. But by the 11th of February the struggle was at an end. Anne, it was reported, was inclined to support Harley at all hazards. But Harley was more timid or wiser than his mistress. He knew that the days had passed when the bare authority of the sovereign could uphold a minister against an adverse Parliament, and he therefore counselled the Queen to accept his resignation. Prince George, who was fast sinking under his complaints, and who apprehended that his last hours would be disturbed by political troubles, added his entreaties to those of the Secretary. Anne at length yielded. She summoned Marlborough to the palace, and informed him, in a few bitter words, that the Minister who had become obnoxious to him should no longer remain in her service.*

Harley's resignation was immediately followed by that of three other office-holders, his personal friends and political allies, St. John, Sir Thomas Mansell, Comptroller of the household, and Sir Simon Harcourt, who had been for ten months Attorney-General. By the manner in which their appointments were distributed, it seemed that Anne, worn out by her vain struggle to emancipate herself, was content for the time to be passive in the hands of her tyrants. Whigs were raised to three of the places laid down. Harley's office was given to Henry Boyle, an intimate friend of Godolphin, who had for some time discharged the subordinate duties of Chancellor of the Exchequer. Robert Walpole, whose reputation as a sound and sensible speaker had been steadily rising with the Commons, and who had been, two years back, placed by the Treasurer's influence on the Council of Prince George, became Secretary for War. The Earl of Cholmondeley succeeded Mansell. The post of Attorney was not filled till some time later.

* Various letters in Coxe's Memoirs; Conduct of the Duchess; Burnet; the letter of Swift previously cited.

The triumph of Marlborough and Godolphin was complete. Yet it was impossible that two men so clear-sighted could deceive themselves on two points. In the first place the feelings of esteem and affection which Anne had so long entertained for them were gone, probably beyond hope of recovery. It must have been evident that they would be retained in employment only so long as their services were indispensable, and that her Majesty would avail herself of any turn of public sentiment or any alteration in the composition of the Parliament to rid herself of advisers so distasteful. In the second place they had broken wholly with the Tories. Their own necessities had forced them into co-operation with the Whigs, and thenceforth their fortunes would stand or fall with those of their new allies. Yet, as far as human foresight could extend, their authority might now seem fixed on a firmer basis than at any former period. The Whigs were supreme in the Parliament; and it might be inferred that so long as the nation was intent upon prosecuting the war, the Whigs would have the advantage in every new election. Never, in truth, had the chances of a Tory administration succeeding to power appeared less than at this period.

Harmony was restored at a critical time, for in less than three weeks after the resignation of Harley and his friends the Government had need to exert all its energies. The whole island was thrown into a state of agitation by news of tremendous import. For some months past an expedition had been fitting out in the harbour of Dunkirk, and people had been busy in conjecturing its destination. The first suspicion of the Dutch naturally was that an invasion of their own territory was meditated, and troops were marched down to secure the coast of Zeeland. But on the 3rd of March, Marlborough received information from the vigilant Cadogan which left him in no doubt of what was intended. He learned that the Pretender was in Dunkirk, that he was about to embark in company with twelve battalions of French troops, and that the probable destination of the expedition was Scotland. The purport of the Dutch letters was promptly communicated, by the Queen's orders, to the House of Commons; and the first measure of that body was to pass a bill suspending the act of habeas corpus.

Upon the following day an address was presented to Anne by both Houses. Her Majesty was assured in the most loyal strains of the determination of her Parliament to stand by and assist her against the pretended Prince of Wales and all her other enemies. The address concluded with the recommendation that was customary in times of public alarm, that the laws against Papists and non-jurors should be put in force, and that all persons suspected of disaffection should be at once taken into custody.

Throughout England, but especially in London, the consternation was great. For the accounts which were current of the state of feeling in Scotland left few persons in doubt that, if James did effect a landing in that kingdom, he would be able to raise an army out of the entire population. What was then to obstruct his progress southward? There was not a fortified town between Edinburgh and London which could check the course of an invader. The Queen's troops in Scotland were but three or four regiments in all; and although their commander, Lord Leven, was reputed a staunch Whig, the fidelity of the men could not be depended upon. In England the regular force was estimated to be at the most five thousand raw recruits, who were getting ready to cross the channel.

It is interesting to read for the first time in English history that the national alarm manifested itself in the fall of stocks and shares, and in a run upon the Bank. Before the delivery of the Queen's message to the Commons the stock of the East India Company stood at a hundred and eight. The quotation fell rapidly, and in ten days was only ninety-nine, when favourable news caused a rally. During this period of panic the Bank was beset by its creditors in such numbers as to render it only too probable that, unless something was done to excuse the Corporation from fulfilling their obligations, their cash would be drained to the last guinea. The whole amount of the Bank's bills and notes in circulation was under six hundred and fifty thousand pounds. Its capital, on the other hand, consisted of two millions two hundred thousand pounds. But of this capital upwards of one-half was, to use a modern financial term, locked up, by having been advanced to the Government upon the security of Exchequer bills. It is obvious how deeply

interested the Government was, under these circumstances, to uphold the credit of the Bank. Its debt to that institution it had neither the means nor the intention to discharge. The debt had been, ever since the foundation of the Bank, regarded as a permanent loan; and the shareholders, in consideration of the advantages they enjoyed through their charter, had been hitherto content to accept the interest without demanding the return of the principal. But if the credit of the Bank were so injured as to render the continuation of its business useless, the shareholders would, no doubt, surrender their charter, and require the repayment of their money. The inevitable sequel therefore to the ruin of the Bank, would be that the Exchequer would be forced to admit its insolvency. Great efforts were accordingly made to avert such a catastrophe. To induce the holders of paper to retain their securities, it was announced that her Majesty would, for the next six months, guarantee interest at the rate of six per cent. upon all Bank bills in place of the three per cent. which they then bore. It was moreover intimated to the Directors that, in case of need, all the money in the Treasury, amounting to three hundred thousand pounds, should be placed at their disposal; and this offer was supplemented by private offers of assistance from some of the more wealthy noblemen, who wished well to the Government. Marlborough, enriched by five years of enormous salaries and perquisites, was among those who were most liberal in volunteering aid. But the Directors were able to dispense with such extraneous help. They judged it most prudent to strengthen the position of the Bank by doubling its capital; and so quickly was the subscription list filled, that all danger of a collapse passed away. It is not a little amusing to read the remarks made by Whig writers upon the conduct of those persons who, while the panic was at its height, had come running for their money. The malice of such creditors was evident. They must have been either Jacobites, who wanted to embarrass the Government, or goldsmiths who wanted to ruin an institution which was rapidly absorbing the most profitable branch of their old business, the custody of bullion. The experience of many subsequent panics will probably incline the theorist of the present day to dismiss the sentiments of disloyalty and jealousy

from among the motives which instigate creditors, at periods when the political horizon overclouds, to turn every security into gold.*

The country was not long kept in anxiety about the invasion. The Council of Prince George, roused out of its languor perhaps by the reviling it had just undergone, now acted with laudable promptitude. While the object of the preparations at Dunkirk was still matter of conjecture, a fleet of twenty-six ships had been hastily equipped, and sent, under the command of Sir George Byng, to cruise off the Flemish coast. Fourbin, who was at the head of the expedition, and who had hitherto flattered himself that the muster of troops in the town, and the collection of ships in the harbour had excited no suspicion, was much disconcerted by this unexpected appearance of the enemy in strength. As his own force did not exceed eight men-of-war, he despatched a messenger to Paris for further instructions. Before the messenger returned, violent gales had blown the English admiral almost back to the coast of England. The expedition set sail, therefore, on the 6th of March, and after encountering many difficulties from bad weather, reached the entrance to the Firth of Forth on the evening of the 12th. All on shore was astonishingly quiet; and the next morning would probably have witnessed the disembarkation of the Pretender and the French troops in close proximity to Edinburgh. But hardly had the sun risen on the 13th when the whole horizon to the south was seen studded with sails. Byng had been apprized of the escape of the expedition, had guessed its destination, and had made the best of his way in pursuit. His fleet had, by the exertions of the Council, been by this time augmented to no less than forty ships of the line. Fourbin at once gave up the enterprise for lost. In the agony of disappointment the young Pretender entreated to be set on shore, were he accompanied only by his personal attendants; but the French admiral had an account to render to his master, and refused to comply. To cut his cables, to crowd all sail, and

* Lettres Historiques: Luttrell's brief relation; Boyer; Oldmixon. The House of Commons passed a resolution on the 20th March that "Whoever designedly endeavours to destroy or lessen the public credit, especially at a time when the kingdom is threatened with invasion, is guilty of an high crime and misdemeanour, and is an enemy to her Majesty and the kingdom."

to take advantage of a breeze, which, fortunately for him, sprung up from off shore, were the work of little time. Most of his ships, better sailers than Byng's, were soon far in advance of their pursuers. The English, however, kept up the chase till night, and succeeded in making one capture—of the *Salisbury*—which had been, five years since, taken by the French. On board were about twenty English, Irish, and Scotch Jacobites, among whom the most notable were Lord Griffin, Colonel Francis Wauchope, and two sons of the Earl of Middleton. They were all sent to the Tower. That Griffin, at least, would suffer death, was matter of general expectation. He was an old man of respectable character, who, having been advanced to the peerage by James, had gratefully followed the fortunes of his benefactor, and had been outlawed for his devotion to a wrong cause by the Government of William. Anne, after a debate in the Council, determined to spare him; an instance of clemency which the Whigs chose to attribute to her Majesty's partiality for Jacobites.*

The scheme of invasion was at an end, and our countrymen, so lately desponding, were now murmuring at Byng for not having captured more of the enemy's ships. It is interesting, however, to examine the chances which the expedition had of succeeding in its object.

Since the death of James II. much the same style of gloomy and austere devotion had been kept up at the Court of St. Germains as during the lifetime of the royal bigot. The eldest son who, but for the folly of his parent, would have been reigning in England, was now verging on manhood. His character afforded little encouragement to those who had thrown in their lot with him. His temper indeed was mild, his manners affable and even engaging, and he undoubtedly possessed a sufficient degree of animal courage to preserve him from disgrace on a field of battle. But his ordinary condition was that of a listless, melancholy being, incapable of any great mental exertion, and morbidly distrustful of the future. It would seem as if the misfortunes of his house had imposed a permanent blight upon his spirits. He could never catch the

* Campagne de Flandre; Macpherson, Stuart Papers; St. Simon; Lettres Historiques; Boyer; Burnet.

enthusiasm of those faithful, zealous, and sanguine men who were incessantly plotting his restoration. In the midst of those who would cheerfully lay down their lives for him, and at times when his affairs wore their most promising appearance, the Chevalier remained cold and mournful. Long before the chance of failure in any scheme presented itself to his weakest partisan, he himself had abandoned all hope. His education had been of that sternly religious character, from which a boy of vivacious intellect generally emerges a monster of depravity, and a boy of ordinary parts a superstitious dotard. His mother and her priests had done their best to eradicate from his mind any strength it may have originally possessed. He had been taught to look to the Church for guidance in every step. His dependence on others was, in fact, complete. His conscience impelled him to be perpetually consulting his confessor. He seems never to have made a movement in his relations with the world except at the instigation of some counsellor.*

For a long time past the presiding spirit at St. Germains had been the Earl of Middleton; and a servant more able or energetic the Stuarts could not have possessed. His functions had been, on the one hand, to keep up a correspondence with the Jacobites of England and Scotland, and on the other to ply the ministers of Louis with continual solicitations for assistance in schemes of invasion. Upon Marlborough and Godolphin his agents kept up a close watch. What course these two all-powerful ministers would take when the time came for deciding, was a problem which the Court of St. Germains seems to have been never weary of discussing. They openly supported the claims of Hanover: they were evidently bent on ingratiating themselves with the Electoral family; yet they seldom let slip an opportunity for transmitting assurances of their fidelity, in spite of all appearances, to the dynasty they had formerly served. The object of Marlborough and Godolphin in this double dealing, and the object of several other men who had borne a prominent share in the Revolution, and who pursued a similar course, it now requires but little ingenuity to divine. While doing all in their power to ensure the succession of the

* Bolingbroke in his Letter to Sir William Wyndham enlarges on the character of the Pretender, and his perpetual dread of hell-fire.

Hanoverians, they thought it prudent to keep open a back door to the forgiveness of the Stuarts. Who could say what might happen, what changes might come over the national feelings—nay, what were the national feelings towards the exiled family at that moment? How small had seemed the chances that the posterity of Charles I. would regain the throne up to a few months of the family being restored! Should the Stuarts again recover the hearts of their subjects, the position of the leading Revolutionists would become almost as dangerous as was that of the Bradshaws, Iretons, and Ludlows, in 1660. Situated, therefore, as were the statesmen of the reigns of William and Anne, it is not strange that, while faithfully serving the sovereign in possession, they should have done their best to provide for contingencies. They had staked heavily upon an event so doubtful as the turn of public opinion; and should it prove that they had staked unfortunately, the consequences to themselves would be ruin, and not improbably a traitor's death upon the scaffold. The Stuarts themselves were not for one moment deceived by the professions of Marlborough and Godolphin; but they received them with a show of graciousness in the fear lest, if such men should consider their cases beyond hope, they would throw themselves unreservedly into the cause of their rivals. The plain inference to be drawn from the conduct of the two friends is, that it was their intention to exert themselves to secure the succession of the Hanoverians up to the very moment of perceiving that the tide was turning irresistibly in favour of the Stuarts. They would then have transferred their weight to the other scale, have been the first to welcome the restored monarch, and would have bewailed the hard fate which had compelled them to serve usurpers against their consciences.

The state in which Scotland was reported to be during 1706 aroused at the Court of St. Germains hopes that were not unreasonable. All the Jacobite nobles, who kept up communications with the exiled family, were confident that the entire population would rise the instant that the lawful sovereign set foot in the country. At the very least, the most warlike portion of the inhabitants, the clans of the midland and the disaffected enthusiasts of the western shires, might be depended

upon to take arms for him. But the nobles almost invariably added that it was necessary that the King should be accompanied by some regular force to enable him to make good his landing, to beat off the few regiments that would be immediately brought against him, to seize a few strongholds, and to form the nucleus of an army. It would be also, they stated, a prudent measure if, in view of the poverty of the country, his Majesty came provided with a considerable supply of arms and a sum of money.

The person who was most frequently charged to communicate to James the loyalty and advice of his adherents, was an Englishman, or perhaps a Scotchman, named Hooke. This man had been formerly a Protestant and a chaplain in the service of the Duke of Monmouth, had accompanied his master to the field of Sedgmoor, and had been taken prisoner. His confinement in the Tower was not, however, of long duration. He passed over to France, flung off his sacred office and his religion together, and accepted a commission in the army of Louis. His Majesty nevertheless preferred to employ Colonel Hooke in a diplomatic rather than in a military capacity. In French circles he was considered to be the best informed of all his companions in exile about the mysteries of English and Scotch affairs, and he certainly spoke upon the subject with much ability. He was held in high esteem by some of the greatest noblemen of France, so high, indeed, as to injure his credit at St. Germains, where Hooke was suspected of being more a Frenchman than a Jacobite.

This man it was who first drew the attention of the French ministers to the advantages their master might reap by sending an expedition to Scotland and setting that kingdom against England. If, he represented, the Queen were given a serious insurrection to quell, she would certainly be in no condition to send soldiers to Flanders or Spain; and without the active support of England, the Dutch and the Emperor would scarcely be able to continue the war through another campaign. Pontchartrain, Chamillart, Madame de Maintenon were all talked over in succession: but some time elapsed before anyone had the courage to mention the scheme to Louis. His Ministers well knew how completely experience had disgusted him with enterprises of

this nature, and were not without apprehensions of incurring his anger if they opened their lips upon such subjects again. When the project was at length communicated to the King, he received the suggestion coldly, although, it should seem, without expressing direct disapprobation. He had no faith in such daring and hazardous schemes: he knew nothing of the state of public feeling in Scotland, nor could his Ministers enlighten him satisfactorily upon this point; for the conditions of society in the heart of Africa were about as familiar to Chamillart as the political views entertained by the inhabitants of North Britain. But he found that his guests at St. Germains had set their hearts upon an invasion. Middleton was continually urging upon the Ministers that this was the favourable moment. The King's own circumstances, moreover, at the close of 1706, were such as might well tempt him to adopt a desperate remedy. He decided, therefore, not to reject the scheme too hastily. Hooke was summoned to the royal presence, and closely questioned. His Majesty told him he wished for more precise information as to the Scottish nobles who would support the cause of James. He should like to see their handwriting, and to have it stated in clear terms what force they could bring into the field. Instructions were accordingly made out for Hooke to repair to Scotland, to see the Jacobite leaders, to obtain from them specific engagements, and to return and make his report.

Hooke, furnished with credentials from the King of France and with letters from James to several members of the nobility, reached Scotland at the end of March, 1707, and found the country in a perfect frenzy of indignation against England. He at once put himself into communication with the Jacobite leaders. Some of them, as the Countess Dowager of Errol, and her son, the Earl, were so eager for rebellion that they were ready to promise anything and sign anything. But most of the superior nobles were disposed to be very cautious in their dealings with Hooke. Private advices, it seems, had been sent by some persons at the Court of St. Germains that the Colonel's mission was much more in the interest of the King of France than in that of the King of England, and that it behoved people to be careful how they put themselves into danger

merely to satisfy the curiosity of his most Christian Majesty. Athol, the most powerful of the Jacobite nobles, would only send a representative to Hooke. Hamilton took to his bed as soon as the Colonel's feet touched Scottish soil, and although he also sent a representative to express his transports at being thought worthy of a letter from his sovereign, he deplored that sickness prevented him from receiving the bearer. Both representatives had the same question to put to Hooke. They desired to be informed as to what his Christian Majesty was willing to provide, and the Colonel was not a little embarrassed to answer. He had been charged in the most express manner to make no promises which the King, on account of his large expenses elsewhere, might be unable to fulfill. He was reduced, therefore, to say that he had come not to make proposals, but to receive them. In spite, however, of the little satisfaction he was able to give as to the intentions of the French king, Hooke succeeded in getting about a dozen of the Scotch nobles to join in a memorial to Louis, and these took upon themselves, with what authority was only known to themselves, to sign as proxies for about a dozen more. As the whole population, it was stated in this memorial, would certainly rise the moment King James landed in the country, it would be easy to select from the mass an army of twenty-five thousand men. Such a force would be sufficient to overthrow the Government of Scotland, and to attempt the invasion of England. But it was represented with much humility, the nation was very poor. The calamities of bad harvests and the artifices of the English had combined to drain the country of specie. The advance of a hundred thousand pistoles would be requisite to enable the army to march southward, and furthermore a monthly subsidy must be paid with regularity to keep the army together. Arms and ammunition, cannon and artillerymen, officers and engineers were all greatly needed. A force of regular troops would also be necessary to protect the King upon his landing. Of how many men this force should consist, the memorialists respectfully left it to his Christian Majesty to determine.

The substance of this document, with which Hooke returned immediately to France, must have dashed to the ground any hopes built by the French ministers on a scheme of invasion.

For while they, on the one hand, were indisposed to launch into any expense, or incur any serious risk, it was clear, on the other, that the Scotch rebels looked to them for everything. Louis, nevertheless, determined that the enterprise should be attempted. His persistence in an undertaking which really wore a most unpromising appearance has been attributed to different motives. The state of his fortunes was becoming more and more desperate; and he may well have imagined that an insurrection in Scotland, if it could be excited, would paralyse the energies of his most obstinate and powerful foe. But it is not improbable that a chivalrous desire to benefit the Stuarts was, after all, his leading inducement. The movements of the allied armies, however, kept him too much occupied during the remainder of the year to do anything in furtherance of the project. His orders to prepare an armament at Dunkirk were issued in the beginning of 1708. Hardly more than two or three persons were admitted to the secret. No official information was sent to the Pretender himself that an expedition was being organised in his favour, until all was nearly ready. Preparations for the journey to Dunkirk were then commenced at St. Germains, on the pretext that the King of England designed to pass some time with Vendôme at his country seat at Anêt. Louis paid the young prince a visit upon the eve of his departure, and presented him with a sword. James appeared overwhelmed at receiving this fresh proof of the munificence of his generous host. He vowed that, if ever fortune should restore him to his throne, he would return and render his thanks in person. The great monarch listened to this outpouring of gratitude with his usual stately composure. "The best wish I can form for your Majesty," he replied, "is that I may never see you again."

To preserve his incognito upon the journey it was decided that James should, until the time of embarking, lay aside the style of King of England, and pass as the Chevalier de St. George. But the moment he reached Dunkirk all secrecy was at an end. There he found a magnificent equipage awaiting him, sumptuous tents, services of gold and silver plate, and a company of richly-habited dragoons, who were to serve him as body-guard. Standards were borne about emblazoned on one

side with the arms of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and upon the other with boastful mottoes. All those doubts which had for weeks perplexed the spies of England and Holland as to the object of the preparations were at once removed. The report that the Pretender was in Dunkirk, and that the expedition was on the point of sailing to the coast of Scotland, spread far and wide, reached Cadogan at the Hague and Byng at sea.

All was nevertheless ready for departure when James reached the town. The troops had been embarked, a large supply of arms and a sum of money were on board, when Fourbin discovered, to his astonishment, that the port was beset by an English fleet. His first conception was that Sir John Leake, who had sailed for Portugal some time back, must have received notice of the intended expedition, and that he had returned to prevent its leaving the harbour. The bold and ingenious Admiral consoled himself with the reflection that, at this season of fogs, dark nights, and tempestuous seas, it would be no difficult task to slip through the ranks of his opponents. But the incident, by compelling him to refer to Versailles, caused delay, and during the delay the luckless Pretender sickened with the measles. The Admiral was in despair. He was impatient to sail. Foul weather had driven the English ships out of sight. He knew that the secret of the expedition must by this time have transpired, and that every day he lingered in Dunkirk gave time to the enemy to strengthen his defences. Yet the royal physicians persisted in maintaining that, if their patient were put on board in the state in which he was, it would be at the peril of his life; and James's attendants urged him with affectionate importunity to be guided by their advice, and remain on shore. Again Fourbin was obliged to communicate with Versailles. Louis, by his answer, referred the decision upon this matter to the Chevalier himself; and James, buoyed up with the hope of regaining his crown, at once ordered his servants to convey him on board.*

Such is the history of an enterprise which, but for the extraordinary energy shown by that very department of Government

* Hooke, Secret History; Macpherson, Papers; Lockhart; St. Simon; Burnet; Boyer; Lettres Historiques.

where energy might have been least expected, the Admiralty, would not improbably have been the means of excluding that dynasty of sovereigns which has since 1714 reigned in the British islands. A careful consideration of the circumstances under which the Stuart princes subsequently endeavoured to recover the throne, will perhaps incline the student to the belief that, neither in 1715 nor in 1745, were their chances of success so great as in 1708. It need not be assumed that a majority, or even a large minority of the Scotch sympathised with the Pretender. His religion alone sufficed to exclude him from the affections of the more sober part of the population. But the rage against England was intense and universal. Thousands of staunch Protestants would, at this period, have joined the ranks of James and the French, out of mere lust for revenge, in the hope of dealing a blow at their oppressors, of throwing the southern country into confusion. The national fury which, in 1708, stood at boiling-point, began from that time to cool; and we may feel assured that the men who, in 1745, took arms for Charles Edward, were in general sincere Jacobites. But when the Scottish nobles informed Louis, in 1707, that the whole population would rise as soon as the King landed, they were not merely uttering the visionary predictions of sanguine conspirators.

In 1708, as upon the occasion of the invasions of 1715 and 1745, the English Government was, owing to the Parliamentary and popular objections to standing armies, utterly unprepared for an emergency. Marlborough indeed, the moment his suspicions were aroused by the preparations at Dunkirk, sent orders to Cadogan to keep ten battalions in readiness for sailing; and this force did actually reach the Tyne a short time after the retreat of the French fleet. But Fourbin's troops, had he been able to land them, would alone have outnumbered this body. If we take into consideration the proportions which the insurrections assumed in 1715 and 1745, when the Stuart princes were unassisted by foreign troops, and remember that all the motives which induced men to take arms at those periods existed in still greater intensity in 1708, the conclusion can hardly be avoided that, if the disembarkation had been effected, the whole Scottish nation would in a very short time have

embraced the cause of the Pretender. It might not have been necessary to the success of the enterprise, as far as James was concerned, that there should have been any invasion of England. The aspect of the dethroned monarch, once more great and powerful, and already master of one of his kingdoms, would probably have exercised a magical influence over opinions in this country. What we know of the secret dealings of many of the leading statesmen in regard to the exiled family, enables us to form a judgment of what was passing in hundreds of thousands of minds. Innumerable consciences halting between devotion to hereditary right and the dread of Popery, would have hesitated no longer when the cause of James seemed likely to be the winning one. It is indeed impossible to peruse the literature even of a much later date without noticing the hankering after a restoration which existed in the Tory mind, although that hankering may have been excited less by scruples about divine right than a wish to despite the Whigs and Hanoverians.

While James was at Dunkirk, he sent forward a messenger to give his friends notice that the expedition was on the point of sailing. The intelligence was rapidly disseminated among the Jacobites of Scotland, and the anxiety to obtain further accounts disposed people to credulity. Two or three zealous gentlemen of Stirlingshire were deluded by a false rumour that the King had actually landed, mustered their tenants and took the road to Edinburgh, a mistake which afterwards cost them dearly.* Upon the day when news came that Fourbin's ships had been seen from Dunbar, the excitement in the capital reached its height. The Jacobites gave free vent to their joy: the Ministers and office-holders could not conceal their alarm Leven, as he walked the streets, was terrified by the insolence of the people he met. Fully expecting that a landing would be attempted, he drew up his force on Leith sands. Accounts then came that the French were in retreat, and that Byng was following them; but for four and twenty hours longer the state of suspense continued. At length some large ships appeared in the firth, which the citizens at first took for Fourbin's. They proved to be the forerunners of the English fleet.

* Trials of Stirling and others in Howell's State Trials.

The Ministers now began to exercise with vigour the extraordinary powers with which the Executive had been armed by Parliament. Within the space of ten days about thirty arrests were made from among the nobility and gentry of Scotland: but it was regarded as a somewhat significant circumstance that the suspicions of the Government fell not more frequently upon persons who were notoriously Jacobites than upon persons who had rendered themselves conspicuous by their opposition to the Union. Fletcher of Saltoun, who would assuredly have done nothing to promote the interests of any earthly monarch, and Lord Belhaven, upon whose loyalty no doubt had hitherto rested, were secured at the same time as the Earl of Errol, the most zealous and active of all the adherents of James. The prisoners, after having suffered confinement during several weeks in the castles of Stirling and Edinburgh, were sent up to London under a guard. But proofs of their complicity in any scheme of rebellion there were absolutely none. There was no pretext for detaining them, and they were speedily released upon giving bail to appear again if required. The Ministers had not acted with much discretion. They had heaped fresh fuel upon the flames of indignation which filled Scotland. This, it was said, was an example of what might be expected from the Union. The Scottish nobility, it seemed, were on mere suspicion to be dragged in chains from one end of the island to the other, and exposed to all the raillery and impertinence of an English mob.

Athol was summoned to appear before the Privy Council, but was permitted to evade the command by pleading indisposition. Hamilton was arrested in England. The conduct of this cunning and treacherous man was, as usual, an enigma to all parties. The most intelligible explanation is that he was endeavouring to satisfy at the same time the Government and the Jacobites. At the end of January, just at the period when the preparations were commencing at Dunkirk, he found that his presence was urgently needed at his English estates. He submitted his case to two or three Jacobite friends, and requested their advice whether, in the uncertainty in which matters then were, he should act prudently in leaving Scotland.

If his Majesty, he said, were to land while he was in parts where he could render him no assistance, he should never forgive himself. He would remain at any sacrifice to his personal interests, if his friends thought there was the smallest chance of his services being soon required. As not a rumour of the projected expedition had yet reached the gentlemen Hamilton consulted, they saw no objection to his departure, and the Duke at once set off for England with his whole family. Scarcely, however, had he crossed the border, when a messenger overtook him with a letter containing intelligence of the preparations going on in Dunkirk, and intimating that the King might be expected to arrive from day to day. Hamilton was, or feigned to be, in great perplexity. He showed the letter to Lockhart of Carnwath, who was travelling with him, and desired his advice. He was unwilling, he said, to proceed on his journey under such circumstances; but, on the other hand, it was but too probable that the secret of the expedition had by this time been revealed to the Government. To turn back would simply attract suspicion to himself, and he would be thrown into prison. He thought, moreover, that he could render his Majesty assistance just as efficient in Lancashire as in Scotland. Lockhart, whose character as an honest but extremely credulous Jacobite, may be estimated from his writings, and whose admiration of Hamilton's abilities and manners disposed him to an unbounded faith in his integrity, coincided with this reasoning, which certainly did not want plausibility. The result was that the Duke continued his journey, submitted to a brief confinement in his own house, to which the Government thought it necessary to subject him, and emerged from this gentle captivity in the good graces of both parties. The Ministers had no grounds for suspecting his complicity in the scheme of the Pretender: the Jacobites were willing to believe that his absence from Scotland at so critical a conjuncture was the mere effect of chance.*

A history of Great Britain at this period would be incomplete that omitted all mention of certain occurrences, which, frivolous as they really were, no doubt engrossed as large a

* Lockhart's Memoirs.

share of public attention as the subjects of the war and the Union. Towards the end of 1706 three Cevennois came to London, established themselves in the neighbourhood of Soho Square, and at once attracted attention by the novelty of their religious worship. They gave out that they were subject to visitations from the Holy Spirit. When under the influence of this tremendous power, they presented all the appearances of persons suffering from convulsive fits. Their countenances were distorted, their bodies writhed, their limbs were flung wildly about, and from their lips came unintelligible sounds and short incoherent sentences, which their followers termed prophecies, and took down in writing. The presence in England of these suggestive strangers seems to have arisen from the following circumstances. The practice of prophesying had been long pursued in France. The Protestant districts of that kingdom had become, in fact, overstocked with prophets, and the business had begun to lose its attraction or its pecuniary value through the commonness of the gift. Under these conditions Elias Marion, a prophet perhaps endowed with more worldly shrewdness than the generality of his brethren, deemed it advisable to experience a call to a land where he may have heard that money was plentiful and credulity boundless. He came with two disciples, and the success of the three men must have even exceeded their anticipations. Large crowds attended their exhibitions. Imitators, seduced by the ease with which notoriety could be attained, sprang up around them. Their converts included two gentlemen of rank and wealth, upon whom a liberal education had been bestowed in vain, an author, a chemist, and a professor of mathematics. Divines of the Established Church, anxious to recover their influence over their wandering flocks, laboured in pamphlets to convince the people that the prophets were false ones, that they were Socinians in disguise, that instead of being inspired by the Holy Ghost they were inspired by the devil. Philosophers descanted calmly upon the amazing folly of the vulgar. But in spite of their critics, Marion and his disciples continued to prosper. They published a volume of their prophecies. A member of the brotherhood happening to die, it was affirmed that he would rise again that day fortnight; but this prediction

a strong band of unbelievers prevented from being fulfilled by stationing themselves as guards about the grave.*

It is of little importance to examine the pretensions of these fanatics. The religious mountebanks of one generation present but little difference from the mountebanks of another. But it is of great importance to notice the manner in which the authorities of the land decided to deal with such persons, for that manner affords a fair test of the measure of wisdom possessed by the age.

A respectable congregation of French refugees which met in the chapel of the Savoy, fearing lest the freaks of their countrymen should bring discredit upon themselves, made haste to signify their disapprobation of Marion and his disciples. But for the opinions of the Church the prophets cared nothing. Their teaching, if it had any meaning at all, was designed to upset the government by priests, and to establish the sovereignty of the Holy Ghost, or, in other words, the perfect independence of individuals in spiritual matters. They continued, therefore, to exhibit. The crowds that flocked to see them became greater and greater. Frequent tumults arose between believers and unbelievers; and the ministers and elders of the Protestant congregation were annoyed by a vague report, current in good circles, that all this uproar was excited by the French refugees. They at length took legal advice. By the common law of England, they found, any person who pretends to an extraordinary commission from Heaven, and frightens the King's subjects with denunciations of judgments, may be indicted as an impostor and condemned to fine, imprisonment, and corporal punishment.† Under this law, which bears a shocking resemblance to that law of Moses for the alleged infringement of which the Author of our religion suffered death upon the cross, Marion and his disciples were, upon the information of their own countrymen, arraigned, convicted, and condemned to stand in the pillory. They underwent their sentence, as might be expected, with the triumphant

* Boyer; Lettres Historiques; Oldmixon. The volume of prophecies is called "clavis prophetica," and although unintelligible to rational minds may be interesting to the spiritually gifted.

† Jacob's Law Dictionary. There is also a statute, 5 Elizabeth, c. 15, on the subject.

meekness of saints and martyrs, and excited a great deal of sympathy.

That men should be set in the pillory merely for threatening society with hell a little too roughly seems, no doubt, a harsh punishment. Yet the circumstance that the punishment was limited to one which, although degrading was not painful, is of itself a proof of the growing lenience of the authorities towards offences against religion. Only half a century before a madman, named James Nayler, for arrogating to himself the titles of Christ, had been sentenced to stand in the pillory, to have his tongue bored, his cheeks branded, to be whipded through London and Bristol, and to be imprisoned and kept to hard labour during the pleasure of Parliament. A century later a madwoman could announce that she was about to give birth to the second Shiloh without drawing down upon herself any punishment at all. The difference between the treatment of Nayler, Marion, and Southcott satisfactorily registers the progress of civilisation in England

CHAPTER II.

THE first Parliament which had sate for Great Britain now drew to a close. The Whigs had throughout the session preserved and increased their influence, and it cannot be denied that the ascendant they exercised in both Houses over the numerous but disorganized Tories had been exerted most benificially for the country at a critical period of its history. They had commenced their work with a strong feeling that they were unjustly treated in the distribution of those favours that emanate from the Crown, and under the influence of that feeling they had for a moment joined hands with the Tories in a revengeful attack upon the Administration. Had that attack been successful the consequences to the nation could scarcely have failed of being disastrous in the extreme. The unfortunate predilections of Anne would have had full scope: every Whig would have been dismissed from power: the new Ministers would have been all Tories. In what manner men of the political opinions of Rochester, Nottingham, and Haversham would have treated the three great questions of the period, the Union, the war, and the invasion, is not difficult to surmise. Against the Union they had protested; and it is not improbable that in the divided state of the two nations they might have contrived to procure its repeal. The war would hardly have been conducted with much vigour by Ministers who had opposed it from the beginning. The House of Stuart would hardly have been resisted with that energy which was shown by statesmen who were conscious that their offences against that House were inexpiable, and that their fortunes were indissolubly bound up with the continuance of the revolutionary establishment.

Never, in truth, had the administration of Marlborough and

Godolphin seemed more permanently established, or had the affairs of the Whigs worn so promising an appearance as at present. It was now remarked that the Queen, in her public speeches, used expressions evidently introduced for the express purpose of conciliating that party which hitherto she had been known to hold in abhorrence. When the news of the expedition preparing at Dunkirk was communicated to the Parliament, the Lords had sent up an address abounding with Whiggish recommendations, and Anne's reply had been framed in a spirit as Whiggish as the authors of the address could desire. In future, she said, her chief dependence should be placed upon those who had distinguished themselves by their zeal for the Revolution and for the Protestant succession.* That the likings and dislikings of Anne had undergone any real change, no one in the least acquainted with her character could suppose: but it might well be imagined that she had given up the struggle with the Whigs as hopeless, and would henceforth bear her fetters with more resignation.

Upon the 1st of April the Parliament was prorogued and was soon afterwards dissolved by proclamation. Writs for a new election were issued returnable in July. Up to the close of the session Marlborough remained in England, striving, no doubt, as often as opportunity permitted, to recover the place he had once held in Anne's esteem, and using all his influence to persuade his wife to behave with a little more gentleness towards that lady to whose generosity she owed everything she possessed. His back was hardly turned, however, when the obstinate and ungrateful termagant despatched to the Queen a letter which would have irritated the meekest spirit. She informed Anne that, now her husband had left for Holland, it was her intention to go into the country. The hard usage she had undergone, she remarked, was quite sufficient to convince her that her attendance at Court was not desired. Had the letter stopped here it would have only furnished one proof more of the writer's folly in resigning her chances into the hands of her rival. But unfortunately avarice was one of her ruling passions, and she had not the faintest notion of delicacy to guide her as to the times and seasons for displaying it. It

* Boyer; Lettres Historiques.

seems that she had made up her mind that, rather than not have her own way in everything, she would fling up her appointments. But the emoluments arising from them she could not bear to lose. The moment, therefore, that the possibility of her resigning occurred to her, she had set to importuning the Queen to grant the reversion of her places to her daughters. Anne had been fairly teased into acquiescing. She was now reminded of her promise, and the Duchess audaciously added an inducement for her fulfilling it. "If your Majesty thinks fit to dispose of my employments according to the solemn assurances you have been pleased to give me, you shall meet with all the submission and acknowledgments imaginable."* The wonder is, as we peruse the Duchess's letters, how a lady, even as stupid, placid, and good-natured as Anne, could have so long endured a companion whose whole soul was a compound of arrogance and meanness.

At the close of March, Marlborough crossed the Channel and found the Hague thronged by representatives from the Courts of the Allied Powers. Prince Eugene was there for the first time, and so closely was he pursued by curious Republicans that, when his Highness sat down to dinner, it was found necessary to station a guard at his door. A conference was held between the two generals and deputies from the States-general: but this was for form's sake only. The real plan of operations was settled in private between Marlborough, Eugene, and Heinsius. The scheme made public was, that while Marlborough remained in charge of the Netherlands, Eugene should act upon the Moselle with a portion of the troops with which the Elector of Hanover had for the past three months kept guard over the Upper Rhine. It was secretly concerted between the triumvirate that the two commanders should, after making a few feints, unite their forces and strike a vigorous blow in the Netherlands.†

There was, however, a difficulty in the way of this arrangement. The Elector flew into a passion at the suggestion that he should divide his forces with Eugene. Three months of command had convinced George that he was a great general.

* Conduct of the Duchess; Coxe's Memoirs.
† Coxe's Memoirs; Lamberty.

Before the resolute attitude he had maintained even the redoubtable Villars had made haste to recross the Rhine; and laurels were, in imagination, fast wreathing around the electoral brows. That another should reap the harvest of glory which he had promised to himself was an insupportable thought. Such was the jealousy he evinced of Eugene that the Prince despaired of convincing him in which direction lay the interests of the common cause, and requested the assistance of Marlborough. It was necessary that both commanders should make a journey to Hanover for the purpose of soothing the vanity of the offended potentate. After much conditioning, George was prevailed upon to give up a portion of his troops to Eugene. The two commanders, however, did not sufficiently appreciate his retentiveness to entrust him with the secret of the ulterior operations they designed. "We thought it best," wrote Marlborough to Godolphin, "not to acquaint the Elector with our project for joining the two armies. When this is put in execution, I expect he will be very angry. But since the good of the campaign depends upon secrecy, we must bear his indignation with patience." *

This difficulty overcome, the two separated. Eugene returned to Vienna to infuse, if possible, a little of his own energy into the counsels of the Emperor. Marlborough, towards the end of May, took the field, a few miles from Brussels, with an army amounting to fifty-five thousand infantry and half that number of cavalry. Over this large body of men he was to have unlimited control; for the States, in better humour this year than the last, had been prevailed upon to give instructions to their field deputies to offer no opposition to the Captain-general's designs.

Yet, promising as seemed the military prospects, Marlborough commenced the campaign under a load of anxiety. Hardly had he set foot in Holland before Godolphin had been entreating him to return home and speak to Mrs. Morley, who had again turned as obstinate as ever. The Whigs, considering themselves greatly underpaid for their services in the last Parliament, were pressing new demands upon the distracted

* Marlborough to Godolphin, May 3—14. It has often been asserted that George never forgave Marlborough for keeping this secret from him.

Treasurer. Somers, it seemed, the intellectual prince of that terrible set of atheists and republicans, was now the person who was to be forced upon the shuddering sovereign, and Anne was determined not to give way. The office into which his party wished to thrust him was that of President of the Council, an office then enjoyed by the Tory Lord Pembroke. The matter had been opened to Anne before the departure of Marlborough, and the passive manner in which she had at first received it had encouraged the friends to hope that there would be no difficulty. But no sooner was Marlborough gone than her demeanour underwent a change. It was in vain that Godolphin spent hours in trying to convince her of the necessity of gratifying the Whigs. What had Lord Pembroke done, she asked, that he should be should be turned out to make room for Lord Somers? She was reminded that, as far as Pembroke was concerned, he might still remain a Privy Councillor. Then she retorted that there were too many persons in the Council already. At length she declared that she would write to Mr. Freeman for his advice, and she performed her promise in a way that rendered it not a little embarrassing to that counsellor to reply. She hoped, she said, he would not join in the attempt to introduce Lord Somers into her service. It would be utter destruction to her. She would never consent to it. But the answer of Mr. Freeman brought her no comfort. A series of arguments, conveyed in respectful but firm language, concluded with an entreaty that she would follow the advice of the Lord Treasurer, who would never have any thought but for her honour and interest.*

Marlborough had indeed reason to apprehend serious consequences from the Queen's present frame of mind. Reports that her Majesty was about to change her Ministers, and that her real advisers were even now Tories, had filled the politicians of Holland with dismay. Scarcely was the Duke returned from Hanover than four burgomasters from Amsterdam waited upon him, and expressed a hope that, if no propositions of peace came from France before July, her Majesty would have no objection to join the States-general in making propositions to

* Godolphin to Marlborough, April 19—30; April 22, May 3; the Queen to Marlborough, April 22, May 3; Marlborough to the Queen, May 9—20.

France. That a peace party had existed in the United Provinces from the very commencement of the war, and that its numbers had been continually increasing notwithstanding the glorious military successes which had been achieved, were matters sufficiently well known to all the world. But it was a new and an ominous circumstance that the cry for peace should at length have been taken up by the citizens of Amsterdam. The inveteracy nourished in that proud city against the French tyrant, whose legions had once threatened it with pillage and destruction, had become proverbial. It was indeed unaccountable that the leading men of Amsterdam could desire to stop short in that career of retribution which they were now pursuing with the fairest prospects in a military point of view, unless doubts had arisen in their minds as to the dependence which they could place upon their Allies. That such was the case, however, was now made plain by the conversation of the burgomasters. Private letters from England, it appeared, had given them accounts which were only too true of what was passing in that country. The Duchess, the Treasurer, even the Commander-in-Chief himself, were all out of favour: there must soon be a change of Ministers: the Queen's sympathies were all on the side of the Tories, notwithstanding any expressions which might appear in her public speeches: the parties who would probably succeed to power were more interested in bringing about a restoration of the Stuarts than in prosecuting the war with France: England would secede from the confederacy and leave her allies to get out of the contest in the best manner they could. It is not strange that, upon such advices as these, a vehement desire should have been excited in every prudent Hollander to arrange matters with France while a good settlement could still be made.

The substance of this conversation with the burgomasters Marlborough reported to the Queen, in the hope that it might open her eyes to the mischief she was doing. But the hope was a very faint one. "I wish my letter may do good," he wrote to the Duchess; "but I fear all is undone." Godolphin had made, by this time, another vexatious discovery. Prince George, it seemed, was interesting himself in politics, and was in the habit of offering to her Majesty his sentiments upon divers

weighty matters. That the Prince was only the mouthpiece of some one more energetic than himself could admit of no doubt, nor could there be much doubt that the prompter was George Churchill. While, therefore, Harley was instilling his views into the Queen through Mrs. Masham, Churchill was fostering the Queen's dislike of the Whigs through the medium of the Prince. This new grievance was at once communicated to Marlborough, who did his best to remedy it by writing to his brother.

Meantime military operations had commenced in the Netherlands. The first movements of the Allied army were merely of a defensive character, as Marlborough was determined to set nothing to the hazard until he was joined by Eugene. The French, on their part, although somewhat stronger than the Allies, showed no desire of seeking an engagement. Vendôme still retained the command, and had some cause to flatter himself that, in the preceding campaign, uneventful as it was, he had been really the gainer, inasmuch as time had been afforded to his troops to recover that efficiency and confidence which had been so greatly impaired by the disasters of 1706. But a change had been made in Vendôme's position, which was little to the satisfaction of the clever but conceited Frenchman. Louis, untaught by the misfortunes which had resulted from sending Orleans to command in Italy, still adhered to the opinion that the presence of a prince of the royal blood must have a salutary effect upon soldiers, and had therefore adopted the course of sending his grandson, the Duke of Burgundy, to the army of Flanders with the powers of generalissimo. This arrangement had rendered necessary a change in the command of the French armies all round. In the first place, the Elector of Bavaria, whose dignity was too high to admit the superiority of the Duke, had been prevailed upon to leave the Netherlands, where his influence over the population he had governed for many years was considerable. A good round sum had been paid his Highness to induce him to assume the command of the troops on the Rhine. Another place had in consequence to be found for Villars, who absolutely refused to serve again with the personage to whom he ascribed all his disappointments in 1703. The Marshal was loud in his complaints at being trans-

ferred from a region he had studied minutely, and from soldiers who almost worshipped him, to Dauphiné, where he was a stranger to the country and the army. Berwick, the conqueror at Almanza, who had by years of application acquired an unrivalled acquaintance with the peculiarities of Spanish warfare, was summoned to the Rhine for the assistance of the Elector, and the French troops in Spain were thus left entirely in the hands of the inexperienced Orleans.

It was very soon apparent that the project to make way for which so much positive harm had been done, was likely to be attended with anything but advantage to the French army of the Netherlands. A more ill-assorted couple of commanders than the elegant, gentle, and retiring Prince, and the insolent, pushing, filthy Vendôme, could not well be imagined. Burgundy at once conceived such horror of his colleague that he could scarcely endure his presence. The counsels by which he suffered himself to be swayed were given by officers of more courtly demeanour than the Marshal, and by his favourite attendants. Vendôme, on his side, was irritated to such a degree by constant opposition, that he would have looked with delight upon a disaster to the army, if he could have fastened the disgrace of it upon the Prince. The army indeed was in splendid condition. Chamillart himself had visited Flanders, and inspected the magazines. All the renowned regiments, the household troops, the gendarmerie, the carabineers, were present, restored to their full complement, and apparently to their former confidence. But at the council board there was everlasting contention, an ominous presage for an army which would soon have to encounter victorious troops led on by commanders who worked together with an unanimity as complete as if one soul animated two bodies.*

Together with Burgundy, Louis had sent a younger grandson, the Duke of Berry, to receive his first lessons in the art of war. There was a third prince in the camp, whose name can never fail to arouse in Englishmen a degree of interest and compassion. James had, upon returning from his unsuccessful voyage to the coast of Scotland, requested permission to serve a campaign with his Majesty's troops as a volunteer. Once

* St. Simon.

more he laid aside his lofty title of King of England, and re-assumed that of the Chevalier de St. George; and so strictly was his incognito respected as to scandalise some persons in the courtly camp of Burgundy, who thought that a kind of desecration was committed when a royal personage mixed upon equal terms with people whose ancestors had never possessed a crown. His affability and his engaging manners won him many friends, especially among the Irish regiments, at the head of which he occasionally placed himself: but no mention was made of any exploit of his in French despatches.* About the same time that the Chevalier entered the camp of Burgundy and Vendôme, his rival, the Electoral Prince of Hanover, born under a more auspicious planet, arrived at the camp of Marlborough to make acquaintance with the English officers, and to display his courage in the eyes of his destined subjects.

It had been expected, when the arrangements for the campaign were concerted at the Hague, that Eugene would have succeeded in getting his army together by the beginning of June. But the calculation had been made without adequate allowance for the time invariably lost in haggling with those German princes whose duty it was to supply the troops. In the present instance the Elector Palatine, whose contingent was ten thousand men, one-third of the entire army, caused a delay of a whole month. He had some time since laid claim to the Upper Palatinate, and thinking this a good opportunity for pressing his suit at the Imperial court, refused to allow his troops to stir until every ceremony connected with his investiture had been completed. At length Eugene, at the earnest entreaties of Marlborough, ordered the force he had actually collected to move towards Maestricht, leaving the Palatines to follow. It was now time to undeceive the various authorities who had sanctioned the formation of an army upon the Moselle, under the impression that operations were really intended in that quarter. Marlborough undertook this task himself. He wrote to the States-general. Reflection, he said, had convinced him of the slight probability there was that the army of Prince Eugene would be sufficiently large to act with any chance of

* St. Simon. "Il eut chez lui une table de seize couverts où il invitait et où il fut très-gracieux, et mangea chez les officiers généraux qui l'en prièrent."

success upon the Moselle. He had thought, therefore, that it would be to the advantage of the common cause if his Highness joined him in Brabant. The Prince was of the same opinion, and his army was already pushing along the road by forced marches. As soon as the junction was effected a movement would be made against the enemy.

But before Eugenè could reach Marlborough some very serious events had occurred in Flanders. The French had, since their expulsion, two years before, from the conquered towns, never ceased intriguing with the inhabitants, and a great many of the inhabitants were but too well disposed in their favour. It is no slight evidence of the oppressive rule which had been inaugurated by the Dutch, to find a large proportion of the citizens actually regretting the days when their persons and their property had been at the mercy of the most rapacious soldiery in Europe.* Count Bergueich, who had formerly held office under the Elector of Bavaria, had, at the commencement of the year, formed a widely ramified conspiracy for the overthrow of the new governors.† The news of Fourbin's landing in Scotland, it was said, was to be the signal for a rising of the people in every town. Marlborough was well aware of the state of public feeling in the Netherlands. He had many times represented to the authorities in Holland the impolicy of acting the tyrant's part in a country the population of which had so frequently shown a determination not to submit to oppression. It might seem, therefore, unlike his usual caution to leave cities where the French would probably be welcomed as deliverers without garrisons at all adequate to an emergency. The defence of Ghent was abandoned to a small force of cavalry under General Murray, quartered at a few miles distance. Bruges had not even this protection. The explanation is, that Marlborough needed every soldier to raise his army to a footing of something like equality with that of Burgundy and Vendôme, and trusted to his vigilant watch over the enemy's movements to prevent a

* Marlborough to Godolphin, July 9—20. "The States have used this country so ill, that I noways doubt but that all the towns in this country will play us the same trick as Ghent has done, whenever they have it in their power."

† Boyer; Burnet; Campagne de Flandre.

surprise of the cities. For once, however, his good fortune failed him. A clever project for capturing Ghent and Bruges was set on foot in the French camp with so much secrecy that it was imparted by the two commanders only to the officers who were to carry it into execution, and to two or three favoured persons besides, of whom the Chevalier de St. George was one.

The head-quarters of the Allied army had been for nearly a month at Louvain. Those of Burgundy and Vendôme were at Braine la Lew, about twenty miles off, to the south of the forest of Soignies. Each army was, in fact, waiting to see what the other would do. On the 4th of July two detachments left the French camp, and in the evening the main body broke up and marched away in a westerly direction. It was midnight before intelligence of this movement reached Marlborough; but so well were his troops prepared that by four in the morning the whole army was advancing in pursuit. That some design against the cities of Flanders was in contemplation, he could not doubt. His hope was by a rapid march to overtake the enemy, and by threatening an attack, to compel Burgundy and Vendôme to recall their detachments. Before night the Allied army was in the neighbourhood of Brussels, thus insuring the safety of that place. But the next day brought tidings of two disasters. Both Ghent and Bruges had fallen into the power of the French.

It seems that just at daybreak on the morning of the 5th, five or six soldiers presented themselves at one of the gates of Ghent. They informed the guard they were deserters from the French army, and that they were exhausted with fatigue and thirst. They threw themselves on the ground, and begged for a drop of water. The good-natured Flemish militia men on duty were overcome with compassion. In a short time they were drinking and chatting merrily enough with the strangers. Then several more Frenchmen came up, pretended to recognize their comrades, and were invited to join the revel. At length when the guard was nearly intoxicated, a company of a hundred men made its appearance, and seized the gate. The alarm was given: the tocsin was sounded; and the citizens poured out of their houses to see what was the matter. But by this time it was too late to offer resistance. So many companies had already

passed through the captured gate, that the French in the city were two thousand strong. La Faille, the commander, summoned the magistrates to the town hall, and produced to them a proclamation signed by the Elector of Bavaria condoning all past offences of the inhabitants of Ghent. The magistrates, secretly rejoiced at the opportunity of escaping from the irritating tyranny of the Dutch, needed little persuasion to come to an amicable arrangement; and soon the French were in quiet possession of the entire city with the exception of the castle, where a small garrison announced its determination to hold out. Meanwhile information of what was passing had reached Murray, who hastened to the gates with his cavalry. But he found the drawbridges raised, and had no other resource but to retire. Bruges was summoned a few hours afterwards by a detachment sent by La Faille. The officer in command, as an inducement to the authorities to surrender peaceably, announced that Ghent had declared for King Philip. This statement was at first discredited. Time was asked and granted for the purpose of ascertaining the truth. Upon the return of the messenger whom the authorities despatched to the sister city, the keys of Bruges were delivered up.*

Marlborough was meanwhile straining every nerve to overtake the French army before it could cross the Dender. But his adversaries were as anxious to avoid an engagement as he was to seek one, and marched with a rapidity equal to his own. A light detachment which he sent on in advance, only reached the river as the last battalions of Burgundy and Vendôme were preparing to cross.

The most mortifying feature in these events was the facility with which cities so capable of defence as Ghent and Bruges had been surrendered to the French. There was no mistaking the popular feeling. The inhabitants, if not eager to return to their allegiance to King Philip, were but half-hearted in the cause of King Charles. And for this state of things the Dutch had been entirely to blame. They had exercised their privileges as conquerors in such a manner as to convince the conquered that submission to Charles meant in reality nothing but subjection to their old commercial, political and religious rivals. But

* Lettres Historiques; Lamberty; Campagne de Flandre.

it was too late now to expatiate upon the folly of Dutch deputies and governors, and to demonstrate how differently matters would have turned out had the citizens been treated with proper respect and forbearance. It was but too plain that, as the cities of Flanders and Brabant would not be faithful to their new masters through affection, their fidelity must be secured by some fresh proof of the overwhelming power of the confederacy. They had seemingly conceived some hopes that the French would regain their ascendancy in the Netherlands. Those hopes must be at once dissipated. Another battle, as decisive as that of Ramilies, must be forced on and won.

The difficulty, however, in the way of this design was to get at the French army, which was on the other side of the broad Dender. To cross such a stream in the face of a hundred thousand men, was an enterprise too hazardous to be attempted. Yet nothing could appear more certain than that, unless some means were found of reaching the opposite bank, the loss of every town to the west of the Dender would follow. The enemy would doubtless send off detachments to reduce the various strongholds, while the main body continued to guard the passage of the river.

It was at this conjuncture that Eugene, whose ardent spirit could ill support the slow progress his troops were making, rode forward almost unattended, and entered the Allied camp to share the perils and anxieties of his friend. He threw himself with enthusiasm into Marlborough's design of seeking the enemy. It was concerted that the army should by a rapid march attempt to gain Lessines, a place on the Dender, before it could be occupied by Burgundy and Vendôme, should cross at that point, and then move against the French commanders, who were evidently bent on forming the siege of Oudenarde.

This plan was put in execution. At daybreak on the morning of the 9th of July, the Allied army moved out of its camp at Asch, reached Herfelingen about mid-day, and after the enjoyment of a few hours of repose, continued to march throughout the entire night. Before dawn of the 10th, the main body had commenced filing over the Dender at Lessines, upon some bridges which had been laid by an advanced corps. Marlborough was now in hopes of finding his antagonists

engaged in prosecuting the siege of Oudenarde; but he was disappointed. Burgundy and Vendôme, the instant that the bold project of the Allied commanders became apparent, had decided upon abandoning this enterprise, and upon putting the broad and deep waters of the Scheldt between themselves and their enemy. It was their intention to entrench their forces along the left bank of the river in such a manner as would render it impossible for any hostile army to cross. The timid character of this policy was scarcely calculated to raise the spirits of the soldiery; but it had the hearty approval of Louis, who disliked nothing more than to expose his armies to the hazards of a pitched battle, and who was continually inculcating maxims of prudence upon his generals. He had been much delighted with the capture of Ghent and Bruges, and wished to avoid all chance of losing those cities, even if his army were to execute nothing more during the campaign.*

But the extraordinary diligence of Marlborough's movements prevented this plan of defence from being carried out. While Burgundy and Vendôme were composedly assuming that the Allied army had remained in the position in which it had halted at midday on the 9th, Marlborough had by his night march gained Lessines; and when the French commanders imagined, on the morning of the 11th, that their enemy was still miles away on the other side of the Dender, the Allied army was moving towards them with all the speed the wearied limbs of the soldiers could make. It was not until ten o'clock that Burgundy and Vendôme issued orders to their troops to commence the passage of the Scheldt at Gavre, a village five miles below Oudenarde. They themselves were among the first to cross the river, and having done so, quietly sat down with their staffs to eat their breakfast in the shade afforded by some trees. While they were thus engaged an officer galloped up with the startling intelligence that the enemy was at hand, that their advanced guard was already passing the Scheldt at Oudenarde, and that the main body could be discerned in the distance. A few minutes of wild confusion followed. There was a fierce altercation between Burgundy and Vendôme, and between the officers who supported the rival powers. Vendôme

* The King to Burgundy, July 11.

declared that the news could not be true, and persisted in maintaining that it was false, until he had convinced himself to the contrary by the evidence of his own senses.* Having at length made up his mind that a general engagement was inevitable, he hurried the remainder of his troops across the Scheldt, and proceeded to make his dispositions for the battle with that judgment which he always displayed when it pleased him to do his duty. There was indeed abundance of time for drawing up the army, for the parties of the enemy who had got across the Scheldt consisted only of the advanced guard, although the clouds of dust on the horizon indicated the approach of the main body.

Meanwhile Marlborough and Eugene, under some apprehensions for the safety of Cadogan and his advanced detachment, were pressing forward their men. Their anxiety became at length so great that, putting themselves at the head of the Prussian cavalry, they galloped on at full speed, and crossed the Scheldt. They arrived on the field in time to be witnesses of a fierce struggle between Cadogan and an isolated body of French infantry, which had been left in the little hamlet of Eyne. A few Hanoverian squadrons were conducting themselves with signal bravery; and at the head of these gallant soldiers was the Electoral Prince, our predestined sovereign George II.† The contest was short but bloody: the men fell fast: the Prince's horse was shot beneath him: one of his friends was killed by his side. At length the enemy gave way: three entire battalions were made prisoners: the remainder saved their lives and their liberty by the swiftness of their feet.

It was now three in the afternoon. The heads of the Allied columns began to pass over the bridges, and every moment increased the number of English and German regiments across the Scheldt. The French were by this time drawn up upon some heights almost encircling a small plain intersected by a rivulet and rendered very difficult for cavalry by numerous hedges and groups of trees. Their position was, in truth, so

* St. Simon says that Vendôme declared if the Allies were come, the devil must have brought them.

† Boyer; Lettres Historiques; Lamberty.

strong that doubts have been expressed whether Marlborough would, with soldiers wearied from long marching, have ventured to attack them, at least on that day; and during the night they might have easily escaped. But the sight of the enemy had stirred the blood of the high-spirited gentlemen of France, and their entreaties for permission to take their men into action were more than Burgundy could withstand. Without consulting his colleague, he directed a portion of his cavalry to advance, and in a little time the battle commenced in earnest.

The ground was of so broken a character that each battalion and each squadron on either side was compelled to engage with such opponents as it could find, without much reference to what was doing in other parts of the field. The Allies were as yet scarcely formed, and the French had at first the advantage in these desultory encounters. But the British and German infantry marched up so rapidly that the forces which Burgundy had brought into play were soon far outnumbered. Vendôme urged upon the young prince to give orders for the advance of the left wing. But some misinformed counsellors gave it as their opinion that a certain rivulet, which the Allies soon passed with perfect ease, presented an insurmountable obstacle. Instead, therefore, of adopting the Marshal's advice, Burgundy sent orders to the left wing to entrench itself on its own ground. The consequence of this blunder was that one part of the French troops was kept looking on, while the other part was gradually being borne down by three-fourths of the army of the Allies. Marlborough had, with his usual indifference to personal glory, complimented Eugene with the command of the right, and detached battalion after battalion and squadron after squadron from the troops he had reserved for his own direction to enable his friend to achieve the victory.

Opposed to such formidable odds the French, after having maintained their ground for several hours, began at length to give way. But they showed as yet few symptoms of disorder. The possession of each hedge and of each clump of trees was obstinately disputed. The fire of musketry continued to be incessant. The generals of division were, however, much perplexed, sometimes by not receiving any orders at all,

and often by receiving orders that contradicted each other. It was reserved for that part of the Allied army which Marlborough had retained under his own superintendence, to make the movement which rendered the fate of the day no longer doubtful. Towards evening the Dutch regiments on the left, which had been compelled to make a long circuit to get into position, fell with decisive effect upon the right flank of the enemy. At the head of this fresh body of assailants was Overkirk. It was the last exploit of that gallant veteran. For some months his health had been so much impaired that devotion to his profession alone sustained him in the performance of his duties. Within a short time after the battle he died, still at his post.

The ranks of the French, already wavering under the furious assaults of Eugene, were now broken and penetrated at all points. Regiment after regiment, finding itself isolated and surrounded, was compelled to treat for quarter. The splendid cavalry, embarrassed by the difficulties of the ground, did nothing but add to the confusion by getting mixed up with the infantry. Vendôme appears to have exerted himself with irreproachable bravery to turn back the stream of fugitives. For some time he petulantly refused to acknowledge that the battle was lost. But so doleful were the accounts that came from all parts of the field, that he at length growled out a recommendation to his young superior to issue a general order to the army to retire towards Ghent. "I believe, sir," he added, with a cruel sneer at the courage of the Prince, "this is what you have been long wishing for."

So entangled, however, were the right wing and centre with their assailants, that retreat would have been impossible but for the darkness which was now falling around. Precious moments were lost by the Allies in endeavouring to secure the multitudes who lay at their mercy. While one regiment was being disarmed, three or four more regiments had time to steal away. The soldiers being no longer capable of distinguishing between friend and foe, mistakes became of such frequent occurrence that the officers were compelled to exert themselves to stop the firing. The extreme weariness of both men and horses, combined with the darkness of the night, precluded all

attempts at pursuit. The survivors of the battle lay down in their ranks, and enjoyed a sleep which must have been rendered sound, in spite of the falling rain, by the fatigue of a march of fifteen miles, and the excitement of a general engagement. During the night the French hurried off as they could from the field. A few regiments took the road to Courtrai, but the greater portion of the army made the best of its way to Ghent. Vendôme reached that city early the next morning. He went to bed immediately, and there remained, if the malicious narrative of St. Simon be worthy of credit, for thirty hours without issuing an order of any kind.*

In one sense the victory of Oudenarde was almost as complete as the victories which the Allied troops carried off from the fields of Blenheim and Ramilies. The whole French army was driven tumultuously from the ground, leaving behind them their wounded, and very little short of ten thousand prisoners, including seven hundred officers.† "With two hours more daylight," wrote Marlborough exultingly, "we should have made an end of the war." Fortunately for Burgundy and Vendôme, they had already sent their artillery and baggage to Ghent, or these must have fallen into the possession of the victors. Yet, as compared with the magnificent fruits of the two former victories, the field of Oudenarde was barren of results. The capture of not one single town followed as the immediate consequence of the victory. Ghent and Bruges, the objects of greatest desire to the Allied commanders, were still in the grasp of the defeated army. Within twenty-four hours after the battle, that army was drawn up in an impregnable position behind the canal which ran between the two cities. Nor was the loss of some fifteen thousand men of any great importance to Burgundy and Vendôme. Berwick,

* For the incidents of the battle of Oudenarde see Lettres Historiques; Boyer; Lamberty; Coxe's Memoirs; Campagne de Flandre; the comments of Feuquières; St. Simon.

† The Dutch deputies, in writing to the States-general, claim six or seven thousand prisoners; Marlborough (July 26), seven hundred and six officers and seven thousand soldiers; in another letter of same date he observes, "It is most certain that the success we had at Oudenarde has lessened their army at least twenty thousand men;" the Lettres Historiques assign eight thousand prisoners to the left wing only; Berwick in his Memoirs estimates the number at nine thousand; the Campagne de Flandre, on the other hand, computes the losses at only eight hundred prisoners, among whom were three hundred officers.

who had left the Rhine at the same time that Eugene departed from the Moselle, was now at hand with a reinforcement of thirty thousand troops. Yet the victory was of service to the cause of the Allies by striking terror into the wavering population of the Netherlands, and discouraging the reviving confidence of a high-spirited but easily depressed soldiery. It was gained at a much smaller expense than the previous successes. The loss of the Allies in killed and wounded amounted to less than three thousand men. At Blenheim the loss had been twelve thousand; and at Ramilies, where the engagement was of brief duration, it had been under four thousand. This happy state of affairs arose from the circumstance that the Allies, from the rapidity of their movements, brought but a very few pieces of artillery, and these of small calibre, on the field, while, on the side of the French, no cannon whatever appears to have been employed. It is a striking proof of the large share which this engine of destruction had in occasioning the casualties of a battle.

But no military successes, no fresh flower in that wreath of glory which encircled the hero's brows, could lighten the gloom which had fallen over the hero's spirits. While directing with intuitive skill the operations of the Allied troops, it may be safely affirmed that his thoughts were less in the conflict that was actually passing around him, than in the conflict that might be at the same moment raging in the royal closet at home. Each post brought him fresh tidings that Mrs. Morley was more perverse, more intractable, more determined than ever to ruin her affairs by listening to the counsels of Mrs. Masham and Mr. Harley. Of what advantage could it be to defeat the French king abroad, when his friends, the Tories, were winning victories in England? Was not all this blood shed in vain if he, Godolphin, and the Whigs, were to be driven from power, and the helm of State delivered into the hands of those who had never heartily approved of the war, and who were eager for peace on any terms; men who would tear up the Act of Settlement, and surrender up their country to the Pretender, the Pope, and France? Thoughts of this kind seem to have been passing in Marlborough's mind when he wrote the next day to his wife an account of his success,

"I thank God," he said, "for making me the instrument of so much happiness to the Queen, if she will please to make use of it."

Burgundy and Vendôme, to the great chagrin of the Allied commanders, persisted in retaining their hold on Ghent and Bruges, and encamped in a position which it would have been too dangerous to assail. They, in fact, perfectly appreciated the value of these conquests. With Ghent the Allies had lost the greater part of their artillery, and it was necessary that a fresh supply should be drawn from Holland. Until that supply could be procured, it would be impossible to undertake the reduction of any of the numerous towns which now lay open to the army. For a few days, Marlborough was in hopes that the king of France, in his alarm at finding the frontier of his kingdom unprotected, would insist upon his troops marching southward. Every measure was taken that might increase that alarm.* One detachment was sent forth to burn the villages and lay waste the corn-fields of Artois: another, to levy contributions on the inhabitants of Picardy. But these expedients failed to produce the effect upon Louis that was desired. He knew that his enemies were without artillery, and that for want of that essential requisite they could attempt no enterprise of magnitude. He therefore approved of his generals remaining where they were behind the canal of Bruges.

Had the matter rested with Marlborough alone, the Allied army would have disregarded the fortresses that protected the frontier, and marched directly into the interior of France.† His confidence in troops which had never yet encountered the enemy without beating them was by this time almost boundless; and equally confident was the opinion he held of the state of demoralisation which had been engendered in the French army by constant defeats and by the bickering between its leaders. Such an enterprise, however, as an invasion of France could not be undertaken without the express consent of the authorities of the United Provinces. A plan was submitted to the deputies and to some of the leading men in Holland, but was promptly rejected on the score of its being too hazardous. The habitual

* Marlborough to Godolphin, July 23, August 3.
† Marlborough to Godolphin, July 26, August 6.

caution of the Dutch was not, perhaps, ill-timed on this occasion; for Eugene himself was of opinion that the Allied army would expose itself to too great a risk if it entered France without previously acquiring some great fortress as a base for its operations. It was decided, therefore, to lay siege to Lille as soon as the necessary appliances could be obtained. The Dutch, who were sanguine enough to imagine that every fresh town captured in the Netherlands would be a permanent addition to their dominions, readily sanctioned this arrangement.

A part of the siege apparatus was to come from Maestricht, and the rest from Holland. Brussels became, therefore, the central depôt, and towards the end of July an enormous collection of field-pieces and mortars, cannon-balls and bombs, had been amassed in that city. To transport this collection to the camp, now situated upon the Lys, at a distance of about sixty miles, was a work which threatened to be both difficult and perilous. That Burgundy and Vendôme were anxious to avoid another general engagement, was evident. But that they would rest supinely in their camp while the materials intended for the siege of a large city were transported along their flank and front, was scarcely to be expected. The greatest precaution was therefore taken. Part of Eugene's forces, which had been for upwards of a fortnight encamped close to Brussels, was stationed between the road to be pursued by the train and the French army. The Prince himself covered the train with the remainder of his men; and Marlborough drew out his troops in readiness to march to the Prince's assistance at a moment's notice. Thus guarded, the procession left Brussels on the 6th of August. No fewer than sixteen thousand horses were employed in drawing the cannon and ammunition waggons, and the train was twelve miles in length. It pursued its journey somewhat leisurely, for the roads had been reduced to mire by a month of almost continual rain, and the strength of the poor animals was taxed to the utmost. On the 11th, however, it crossed the Scheldt, and was then in safety. It must have been apparent to the French commanders that on this convoy depended the future events of the campaign; but they had not ventured to dispute its passage.*

* See the remarks of Feuquières and St. Simon upon this subject.

That the Allies were meditating the siege of some great city was a matter which admitted of no diversity of opinion in the French camp. But the generals were divided as to the particular city which would be invested. Berwick thought at one time that Mons was the object in view, and despatched a reinforcement to the garrison there. Vendôme treated with scorn the suggestion that the Allied commanders really purposed to lay siege to Lille, and even when undoubted intelligence had been received that the entrenchments were in progress, still maintained that the work was only a feint to entice him from his position by Ghent. Lille, in truth, enjoyed a reputation for being impregnable that was deeply impressed on the minds of Frenchmen, Upon no fortress had Vauban bestowed more care and study; and at a time when this great master was thought to have advanced the science of fortification to perfection, and there had been as yet few opportunities of testing the strength of his handiwork, it is not strange that this reputation should have been enjoyed by the city. It was not, like Namur, indebted solely to engineering skill for its strength. It had been built on the marshy ground formed by the overflowing of the Deule, and was originally regarded, as its name denotes, as an island. A system of drainage by canals had long confined the river to its banks, but its waters still flowed through a broad and deep moat surrounding the city. The defences of Lille, its ravelins, tenailles, and curtains, its citadel isolated by an inner moat, were regarded on all hands as masterpieces of engineering, and were undoubtedly the most perfect examples of the science in existence.

The circumstances under which the Allies commenced the siege of this impregnable city were anything rather than favourable. There was but one road—that from Brussels—upon which they could depend for their supplies of provisions. It was now autumn, and unless the city capitulated before the winter set in, the siege would almost necessarily have to be abandoned. The deluge of rain, the rigours of the season, would render all work impossible, and expose the troops to insupportable hardships. The army of Burgundy and Vendôme, moreover, when joined to the army of Berwick, outnumbered

the united forces of Marlborough and Eugene by at least fifteen thousand men.* At Versailles indeed little apprehension was as yet entertained for the safety of Lille. Nothing could be more fortunate, it was represented to Louis, than that the Allies should choose to waste their time, their strength, and the prestige they had gained by their success at Oudenarde, upon walls that were perfectly impregnable. Before they could make the least impression upon them, they would themselves be surrounded by his Majesty's troops. Their supplies would be cut off, they would be reduced to a state of starvation, and their commanders might deem themselves fortunate if they escaped with a remnant of their men.†

Lille, although taken somewhat by surprise, was not ill prepared to stand a siege. A few days before the Allies appeared under its walls, Boufflers, whose noble defence of Namur was still fresh in the memories of his countrymen, entered the city with the resolution of rivalling by a second defence the fame he had acquired by his first. The garrison, hastily augmented from different resources, reached nearly fifteen thousand men, and comprised some of the best engineers of France. Provisions were tolerably abundant: but there was one important deficiency. The supply of gunpowder was altogether inadequate for the vast requirements of the place. Not a little singularly, however, the Allies were just as badly off in this respect.

The news had soon spread far and wide that the magnificent spectacle of a great fortified town besieged by an army was about to be exhibited to the world, and curiosity attracted to the Allied camp several distinguished spectators. Among others was that King Augustus of Saxony whom Charles XII. had deprived of the crown of Poland. He had not been many days at head-quarters when a fine blue-eyed boy of twelve, a natural child of the King, entered the camp, and made his way to his father's side. He too had heard in Dresden that there was going to be a siege on a grand scale, had given the slip to tutors who pestered him with studies for which he had no

* Berwick to Burgundy, August 12; Marlborough to Godolphin, August 13—24; 20—31.

† Campagne de Flandre; Mémoires de Berwick; St. Simon.

inclination, and had resolutely set off to walk the whole distance of three hundred and fifty miles for the chance of being permitted to enjoy the sight. A splendid destiny was in store for the little fellow, though one that could have been hardly in accordance with his aspirations at that time. He rose to the highest rank and to the highest fame in arms. But who could have foreseen that the handsome boy, who was now sharing in the exultation of the enemies of Louis XIV., would one day be the support of France and the terror of united Germany; and that after leading French armies to constant victories for a series of years, a Marshal de Saxe would die loaded with every honour which Louis XV. could bestow?

That an army of a hundred and ten thousand French would be content to look on while an inferior force ravished from their King one of his most valued cities, was scarcely to be expected. Preparations were made, therefore, to prevent any attempt which might be made to interrupt the progress of the siege. Marlborough and Eugene made a division of their forces. The Prince, with forty thousand men, undertook the work of reducing Lille. Marlborough, with fifty-five thousand, set himself to watch the motions of the enemy. The city was then invested on the 13th of August. The Prince of Orange, acting for Overkirk, who was on his death-bed in the camp, took up his quarters with the Dutch troops on the north side: Eugene stationed himself on the south with his German battalions; and the siege was commenced in the usual scientific method. Sixteen thousand unfortunate peasants, caught in the neighbourhood, were pressed into the service and compelled to assist in forming the lines of circumvallation.

For three weeks the besiegers continued to push forward their parallels, and fire had been already opened from some advanced batteries when news reached Marlborough that Burgundy and Vendôme were at last on the move. For once, it seems, both these generals were in accord in thinking that the siege of Lille was nothing but a device to draw them from that position in which they kept guard over Ghent and Bruges. It is possible that Vendôme would not have clung to this opinion so tenaciously had Berwick been less assiduous in endeavouring to convince him of his error. The latter

marshal, in a fever of impatience, sent plan after plan to the camp behind the canal, and adjured his coadjutors to do something; but Burgundy and Vendôme still refused to stir. At length Louis, alarmed by the vigorous manner in which the Allies were pushing on their works, sent peremptory orders to his grandson to march to the relief of the city.* Then the camp was broken up, the troops which had been scattered far and wide to levy contributions upon a portion of the Dutch territory were assembled, and a messenger was despatched to Boufflers to cheer him with the announcement that the grand army was approaching to his assistance. The march was directed southward, and a junction was effected with Berwick at Lessines. The union between the armies was not, however, followed by union between the generals. Berwick had been specially enjoined by Louis that, in the event of the armies uniting, he should defer to Vendôme, and could not conceal the agony of mortification and jealousy it cost him to submit to a brother marshal.† In truth, the notions entertained by a marshal of France touching his dignity were as exalted as those of a cardinal of the Church. For the youngest marshal to take the word from any person under the rank of a prince of the blood, was insupportable humiliation. In 1672 all the authority of Louis had been exerted in vain to procure for Turenne the deference of his fellow marshals, and if these had felt insurmountable scruples in submitting to a commander so renowned, so unassuming, and so universally beloved as Turenne, the disgust of the conqueror of Almanza may be conceived in being forced to receive commands from the rude and domineering Vendôme. It would have been better if Berwick had, under the circumstances, abstained altogether from obtruding his opinions, for Vendôme took a delight in enraging him, and was determined to disagree with everything he said. Berwick, at the council board, could hardly keep from sneering at the want of enterprise that was shown in the management of the army: Vendôme, as he lost his temper, became insolent and unreasonable. The consequence of this state of affairs was that the joint talents of two really able commanders were pro-

* The King to Burgundy, August 14.
† Memoirs de Berwick; St. Simon.

ductive of a campaign which, if not so disastrous, was yet more profoundly humiliating to France than that campaign of 1706, when the army was under the orders of a single simpleton.

In the Allied camps, meanwhile, everything went on in perfect harmony. The two commanders met frequently. Gathering from the movements of the French that their approach might be expected from the side of Douai, they chose in concert a strong position for Marlborough's army, and as the enemy drew near Eugene strengthened his colleague with a considerable part of his own force. "The ground is so very much for our advantage," wrote Marlborough exultingly to Godolphin, "that with the blessing of God we shall certainly beat them. It is to be wished they will venture, but I really think they will not."* On the 5th of September the hostile armies were opposite each other, and a bloody battle seemed likely to ensue. But the two marshals were of different opinions as to the course which it was advisable to pursue. Berwick, upon reconnoitring the position of the Allies, was appalled by the difficulties it presented. The army was posted in a spacious plain, but the approaches to it were so covered by trees as to render it impossible for an attacking force to advance in order. Berwick was, under these circumstances, strongly against attacking, and that he counselled wisely on this occasion the letters of Marlborough leave us in no doubt. But jealousy had so obscured Vendôme's judgment that he persisted in contending that the obstacles which so impressed his coadjutor were of no real importance whatever. Burgundy, with two equally experienced generals advising him different ways, was afraid to side with either, and adopted what must appear the supremely absurd course of sending to Versailles for the decision of his Majesty. Two days elapsed, and then the answer of Louis was brought by Chamillart himself. The opinion of Vendôme had prevailed over that of Berwick. The King could not endure the thought of losing Lille, and had determined that, whatever might be the result, an attempt to save it should be made. But the opportunity, if opportunity there had been of attacking the Allied army with a chance of success, had by this time passed away. Marlborough had made the most of the two days. His

* Marlborough to Godolphin, September 3—14;

centre, which Vendôme had declared capable of being forced, was now protected by a strong breastwork. So convinced, indeed, was Marlborough himself of the absolute security of his position, that, unwilling to lose further time in the prosecution of the siege, he had sent back the reinforcement with which Eugene had supplied him. For six days longer, however, the French maintained a distant cannonade upon his entrenchments, which, although it produced no effect whatever, kept him continually on the alert. In fact, the King's orders to his grandson to relieve Lille were so imperative that the marshals were all in the greatest perplexity. Even Vendôme was now forced to admit, though with a bad grace, that the thing had become impracticable. The time which had been allowed the enemy to strengthen his position, he explained to Louis, coupled with the bad spirit which timid counsellors had infused into the army, had destroyed the confidence he had once had. At length a general resolution was adopted of endeavouring to save Lille by other methods than hazarding a battle. The safest plan, it was now concluded, would be to close the roads by which the Allies received their provisions and ammunition, and accordingly the army was marched off in the direction of the Scheldt.

Against all anticipations therefore it seemed now that the Allies would be permitted to continue the siege at their leisure. But fortifications so strong as those of Lille, defended by an ample and courageous garrison, were not to be carried by a brief cannonading and a single assault. The siege had been now going on for six weeks, and although a fearful sacrifice of life had been made in pushing forward the parallels, little or no impression had been as yet made upon the walls. Boufflers, high-spirited to a fault, was rather enraged than disheartened by what he assumed to be the cowardice of those upon whom he had placed his main hopes of relief. He was fully conscious that, with the little powder that remained to him, his chance of saving the city was small, but his resolution not to surrender one inch of masonry until it had become impossible to retain it was unshaken. The Allied commanders, on their side, were not without anxiety lest the defence should be protracted until the winter months, and regarded with dismay the daily diminu-

tion of their scanty stores. Marlborough made bitter complaints of the unskilfulness of the engineers. An accident which occurred to Eugene led to his making a startling discovery. The Prince, in one of the numerous and bloody assaults upon the counterscarp, received a wound in the head, which confined him to his quarters for ten days, and Marlborough undertook the double duty of superintending the operations of the siege and of the covering army. He at once entered upon a searching investigation of the stores, and found that the quantity of powder and ball remaining did not exceed four days' consumption.* It was plain, therefore, that the enterprise was on the brink of failure. The army of Burgundy and Vendôme had now taken such a position as effectually closed every avenue from Brussels by which supplies could pass. The humiliation of being compelled to abandon the siege seemed therefore inevitable, when, just at this critical conjuncture, matters were saved by an incident partly owing to good fortune and partly to the providence of the Duke.

On the 20th of September an English squadron put into Ostend, having on board between four and five thousand troops and a large supply of munitions of all kinds. The troops were a portion of a force which had been ever since the spring intended for a descent upon some part of the French coast; but as not unfrequently occurred with the combined military and naval designs of this period, it had not been thought essential to the success of the expedition that accurate information as to the soundings and the state of the defences along the threatened shores should be obtained beforehand. Byng, who was the admiral, had to find out for himself all those particulars which he should have found set down in his charts. The consequence was that the disembarkation of the troops was always for one reason or another adjudged to be dangerous or impracticable. In one place where, it had been hoped, a landing could be effected, there proved to be too many rocks: the approach to another place was rendered difficult by shoals; and such formidable batteries played upon the ships from a third place which had been supposed to be utterly defenceless, that the Admiral weighed anchor again with undignified speed. At the

* Marlborough to Godolphin, September 24, October 5.

end of two months' cruising both sailors and soldiers began to sicken with the scurvy, and Byng thought it his wisest course to return to Spithead. There he had not remained a week when orders reached him to depart immediately for Ostend. The orders were dictated by Godolphin. Marlborough, having some time previously foreseen the probability that the French would shut him off from Brussels, had recommended his friend to supply his requirements direct from England.

Ostend, as a place from whence the Allies would endeavour to get supplies, had not been forgotten by the enemy. Vendôme had sent orders to the governor of Nieuport to take measures for laying the country about Ostend under water. There should have been little difficulty in executing these instructions, for the French were masters of the canal at the back of the town, and the whole region between Nieuport and Ostend lay below the level of the sea. But invaluable moments were lost. The men charged to pierce the dykes did their work slowly and unskilfully, and before much damage had been done, the English regiments marched out of the town and seized the commanding position of Leffinghen on the canal. Yet though no further apprehensions were felt on the score of an inundation, it was still matter of grave doubt if a large supply of provisions and ammunition could be conveyed to the camp before Lille. News of the convoy that was preparing at Ostend had reached the French camp, and the marshals were on the alert. So evident was it to them that upon this convoy would depend the fate of the besieged city, that Vendôme proposed marching to intercept it with the greatest part of the army. From this project, however, he allowed himself to be dissuaded, and in an evil hour for the military reputation of his country the duty was entrusted by orders direct from Court to the Count de Lamothe. To this commander were confided no less than twenty-seven thousand men, a number which, it was calculated, would be three to one against any force which the Allies could spare to protect the convoy. Berwick, who had his doubts as to the Count's abilities, repaired to Bruges for the purpose of assisting him with his advice. Both generals appear to have been of opinion that the convoy could take no other course than through a village named Oudenburg, and

that if Lamothe could get there first the convoy would fall into his hands. As soon, therefore, as Lamothe heard that the convoy had left Ostend, he posted off with his cavalry to seize this position.

The convoy, in fact, departed from Ostend on the 27th of September, crossed the canal at Leffinghen during the night, and then continued its journey, not through Oudenburg, as had been expected, but by another road. Lamothe discovered his mistake the next morning upon arriving at that village. He found it occupied by a small body of Allied soldiers; but having now obtained better information as to the route pursued by the convoy, he hurried off to intercept it near the town of Tourhout. He reached the hamlet of Wynendale, within three miles of the town, as the daylight was beginning to fail. Here the road, over which the convoy could not fail to pass, lay between two woods. Had it been possible for him to station his men in these woods, the stores which were making their way to the Allied camp would speedily have fallen into French hands. But Marlborough had not been sleeping, and the woods were already occupied by some six or seven thousand of his troops, under the command of a young but brave and excellent officer named Webb. Lamothe conceived that, unless he could drive out this force, all hopes of capturing the convoy were at an end. He began by a cannonade, which, as the Allied soldiers were well protected by the trees, did very little harm. He then ordered his infantry to advance and charge with the bayonet. But the unfortunate men were soon so bewildered and terrified by the storm of bullets which they encountered without being able to make out where their enemies were, that after firing a volley or two at random, they threw themselves flat on the ground. It had grown so dark by this time that nothing could be done to retrieve the disorder, and there were wild reports in circulation that Marlborough was advancing. Under these circumstances the French took advantage of the night to make good their retreat in all directions. Their commander had, in the judgment of Berwick, one of the most candid and least prejudiced military critics of the age, committed three capital errors in executing the work which had been assigned him: first, in not satisfying himself by personal

observation that the orders for inundating the country were carried out: secondly, in neglecting to ascertain the time of the convoy's departure and the route it would take; and thirdly, in attacking a force posted in a secure position when he might have fallen upon the convoy while in the open country, and reaped all the advantage of his superior numbers.*

In the general joy which the arrival of the convoy diffused throughout the Allied camp Webb received his full share of applause. He was sent home by his kind commander with written encomiums upon his conduct to give an account of the action to the Queen. No single incident connected with the war produced so much excitement in England as this affair of Wynendale. The heroism of Webb was for some years regarded as something supernatural. The story of his great exploit was repeated with exaggerations until it had assumed the shape of an insignificant escort beating off an entire division of the French army.† The security and almost impregnability of his position, and the stupidity of Lamothe in trying to drive six thousand men out of a wood just when daylight was failing, were matters overlooked by the lovers of the marvellous. It may be, however, that his reputation was not founded in larger measure than the reputation of commanders of much greater fame upon the egregious blunders committed by his adversary.

Vendôme, deeply mortified by the stigma which the incompetency of Lamothe had brought upon the military fame of his country, hastened to Oudenburg, assumed the command of Lamothe's division, and saw that work done the neglect of which had produced so much disaster to the French cause. The dykes were now pierced, and the country between Ostend and Nieuport as far as Leffinghen was laid under water. Yet in spite of the inundation flat-bottomed boats and high-wheeled carriages still conveyed powder and provisions from the seaport to the camp, till Vendôme, perceiving that there could be no effectual stoppage of supplies unless Leffinghen were secured, invested that village. The English regiments which held it defended themselves with much resolution for eight days, and

* For the affair of Wynendale see Mémoires de Berwick; Campagne de Flandre; Lettres Historiques.

† It assumes these proportions in Burnet's History.

when they capitulated the place had lost a great part of its value in the eyes of the conquerors. That event to which all Europe had been looking forward during two months, had happened. Lille had succumbed to the bravery and resolution of the Allies.

The besiegers had, as the winter approached, redoubled their efforts to get possession of the city before the severe weather set in. Fire had been kept up so steadily and for such a length of time upon the walls as to produce wide breaches. The moat had been nearly drained by the operations of the engineers. But the valour and watchfulness of the garrison made the progress of the besiegers exceedingly slow. Hardly could the grenadiers obtain a footing on the ravelin or in the covered way, when they were driven back through the breach by a sally of the city's defenders, or they were blown into the air by the springing of a mine prepared beneath the fortifications. The arduous and horrible science of mining was indeed never practised to a greater extent than during this siege. Not unfrequently the miners on each side worked towards each other until they met, and a fierce combat began underground. It was, however, with extreme reluctance that Boufflers at length formed the conclusion that a protracted defence would be useless, and would only entail an additional sacrifice of the brave men who had cheerfully endured wounds and hardships in the service of their king. His activity during the two months of the siege had been marvellous. So determined was he to see everything with his own eyes, to encourage his men by his presence in every encounter, that he upon only three occasions divested himself of his clothes when retiring to rest. Since the enclosure of the city he had received no supplies, except a small quantity of powder through the agency of some squadrons of dragoons, who artfully contrived to deceive the sentinels at the openings of the lines as to their nationality and their business. His ammunition was so nearly exhausted that his cannon scarcely responded to the fire of the besiegers. His supply of meat was failing: the breaches in the walls grew larger with every day; and he could no longer entertain any hope of being relieved from the outside. In these circumstances he perceived that the Allies were making preparations for a

grand and general assault. Throughout the 20th of October crowds of volunteers were engaged in throwing sand-bags and fascines into the now dried moat, and on the following day a fire was opened upon two several parts of the fortifications from forty-five pieces of cannon and fifty-five mortars. The fire was kept up incessantly during four-and-twenty hours, and by the afternoon of the 22nd two enormous breaches had been made in the walls. The Allies had nearly completed their bridges: the troops were drawn out, and were waiting impatiently for the signal to commence the escalade, when above the din of preparation was heard the well-known beat of the chamade. A moment afterwards, and a white flag was seen waving from the ramparts of Lille.*

Hostages were at once exchanged, and the next day two treaties of capitulation were signed, one relating to the garrison and the other to the townspeople. Boufflers was allowed an interval of four days for the purpose of communicating with Burgundy and Vendôme, and of retiring into the citadel with the remains of his troops. More blood was, therefore, to be expended on the capture of this great city, which had already cost the Allies twelve thousand men, as many as fell in the confederate ranks at Blenheim, and more than three times the number of those who perished on the field of Ramilies. The loss consisted entirely of killed and wounded. There had been but little sickness in the camp. It was noticed, indeed, as a remarkable instance of the good fortune of the besiegers that, although the season was unusually wet in most parts of Europe, in Lille and its immediate neighbourhood scarcely a drop of rain fell during the investment. The mortality among the besieged may be estimated by the circumstance that out of the fifteen thousand men whom Boufflers had under his command at the outset, but five or six thousand only retired with him into the citadel. The townspeople had also been active in the defence, and it is quite certain that many hundreds of them were among the fallen.

One remarkable circumstance distinguished the siege which followed of the citadel of Lille from every other siege recorded since the invention of artillery. There was scarcely a gun

* A detailed journal of the siege of Lille is given in the Lettres Historiques.

fired throughout its whole duration. The Allied commanders, deeming it prudent to economise their stock of powder, and having little fear of interruption, resolved to rely upon the slow but sure process of sapping. Boufflers, on his part, was disposed to keep in reserve what little ammunition he possessed. The Allied workmen were consequently permitted to make their approaches with little molestation. Boufflers thought that by detaining the Allies in their present position, he would best promote the success of those manœuvres by which the French commanders still expected to shut off the communications of their adversaries and reduce them to starvation.

The French armies, in fact, were masters of the whole course of the Scheldt, with the exception of the town of Oudenarde. From none of the towns of Flanders or Brabant therefore was it possible for the Allies to draw any provisions or ammunition. The capture of Leffinghen had stopped the passage of their convoys from Ostend. But although excluded from the assistance of their friends, the territory of their enemies lay at their mercy. The peasantry of Artois were compelled to furnish such liberal supplies to the markets of Lille, that for a time beef could be bought for three halfpence, and mutton for twopence a pound.* In about a month, however, intelligence of an alarming nature forced the Allied commanders into action.

Upon the 2nd of November, Chamillart, whom the anxiety of Louis kept vibrating between Versailles and the camp, summoned all the general officers to a council of war. Vendôme adhered to the policy he had formerly recommended of guarding strictly the course of the Scheldt, and was confident that, if this course were adopted, the Allies would be able to do nothing for want of the munitions of war, and would soon be in danger of starving. Berwick disputed with some warmth the possibility of keeping a watch over fifty miles of river, expatiated upon the dangers to which France was exposed by the totally unprotected condition of its frontiers, and half-maddened Vendôme by the ill-concealed sneers with which he criticised his plans. Chamillart, who understood nothing about war, but who was nevertheless armed with authority to decide between the professors of the art, determined the dispute in

* Lettres Historiques.

favour of Vendôme.* That marshal, he knew, now enjoyed the highest credit at Court. Burgundy was so greatly fallen in the royal esteem that his voice went for nothing. He had two devoted friends about his grandfather who were ready at all times to sound his praises, to gloss over his failings, and to throw the blame of miscarriages upon any one rather than him. Yet in spite of all that his charming Duchess and the discreet Maintenon could say, Louis was fast becoming sensible of the error he had committed in sending Burgundy to the army. Vendôme had, of course, employed every means to communicate the deficiencies of the young prince to the King.† Burgundy was, even in the opinion of those who could find every excuse for the faults of royalty, of a very indolent disposition. The tenour of his mind, pious, gentle and timid, was ill suited to the profession [redacted]s. When wanted on urgent business he was either [redacted]with his confessor, or supping convivially with his friends, or playing at tennis. No representation of the necessity for immediate action could induce him to mount his horse when bedtime came. His natural aversion for Vendôme had been fostered by the wretched counsellors who surrounded him to such a point, that the Marshal could propose nothing to which he would give his assent. The King had been compelled, from the outset of the campaign, to act as umpire in a succession of disputes, and was now convinced that he had acted unwisely in cramping the movements of an experienced commander. He was reluctant to place such a stigma upon his grandson as to recall him before the conclusion of the campaign. But Berwick, who had added considerably to the difficulties of Vendôme, he determined to remove at once. Soon after this conference an order was despatched to that marshal to go and take command of the army on the Rhine.

Another project, it seems, had now occurred to the King and his council at Versailles. While the Allies were occupied in besieging the citadel of Lille, and while the forces of Burgundy and Vendôme were in such a position as to render very doubtful the possibility of their returning northwards, a good opportunity presented itself for re-conquering those towns of the Nether-

* Mémoires de Berwick; Campagne de Flandre. † St. Simon.

lands which had been lost by the battle of Ramilies. The loss of Lille would be amply compensated by the recapture of Brussels, Malines, Antwerp, Louvain. For the accomplishment of this enterprise no person appeared to possess so many qualifications as the Elector of Bavaria. He had great skill, or had at least had great experience in warfare: he had been for a long series of years governor of the Netherlands, and the mildness of his sway had endeared him to the inhabitants of the towns. He was then at Compiègne. During the summer he had been opposed on the Rhine to the Elector of Hanover; but both commanders had soon thrown up their appointments in disgust. The detachments which each had been compelled to make towards the principal theatre of war, had so weakened their armies as to preclude all hope of their startling Europe by their achievements. Chamillart now wait[redacted] the Elector with proposals exactly suited to his inclinat[redacted]is Highness repaired to Mons, found assembled there an army of fifteen thousand men, marched straight to Brussels, and upon the 23rd of November sent a threatening message to the commandant of that city. His unexpected approach struck such terror into the partisans of King Charles, that many of them made haste to escape. But the panic was not shared by the Dutch commandant, nor by the garrison of five thousand men, nor by the magistracy who had been carefully selected for their attachment to the Austrian cause. The fortifications of the capital were barely of second-rate order, and the defenders were insufficient in number; but a bold refusal to surrender was returned, and the Elector made his preparations accordingly to carry his threats into execution.

Upon the Allied generals rested the sole hope of the commandant to preserve the city, and a brief space of time was sufficient to prove that this confidence was not misplaced. Marlborough and Eugene no sooner heard of the Elector's march on Brussels, than they formed the resolution of forcing at any sacrifice the passage of the Scheldt. Upon a superficial examination of the impediments in the way of this enterprise, it might appear impossible to conceive an exploit more daring, more certain to be attended by a fearful sacrifice of life. The Scheldt, broad, deep, and rapid, was guarded on its right bank

by at least eighty thousand men; and as if the river were not in itself a sufficient barrier to a hostile force, fortifications had been erected at two or three points along its bank for the further security of the defenders. But there was one drawback to the advantages enjoyed by the French commanders which Berwick had already pointed out. It was plainly impossible, even with eighty thousand men, to keep up an adequate guard over fifty miles of river-course, against an enemy who could bring his whole force to bear on one particular part. Everything depended upon the commanders of the defending army obtaining prompt and reliable intelligence of the movements of the troops whose passage they wished to oppose. It was through the want of proper information that the Elector of Bavaria and Villeroi failed in 1705 to keep Marlborough out of their lines. Burgundy and Vendôme now found themselves, by similar neglect, forced in a single hour from a position which constituted them, in their imaginations, the gaolers of the Allied army.

The Allied troops not engaged in besieging the citadel of Lille had been dispersed for the convenience of subsisting. This arrangement created an impression in the French camp that Marlborough and Eugene intended to do nothing more that season, and were disposing their men in quarters for the winter. It was under these circumstances that the Allied commanders issued orders for the various divisions to assemble on the Lys, within a few miles of those points on the Scheldt where it was proposed to attempt the passage. Two detachments were sent forward on the 26th, one under the command of the dependible Cadogan, the other under that of Count Lottum, with orders to cross the river at two several places above and below Oudenarde. Marlborough and Eugene followed towards the evening with the main body. Both Lottum and Cadogan contrived to lay their bridges, and to pass their divisions over before daylight. The morning of the 27th broke in a thick fog, which kept the French for many hours in ignorance of what had occurred. At length the sentinels of a force commanded by the Baron de Hautefort, which was stationed in some works near Oudenarde, caught sight of the Allied uniform, and raised an alarm. The dragoons turned

out in hot haste. Their general galloped to an eminence, from whence he could obtain a view, and stood aghast at the spectacle which met his eyes. Not only were the two detachments already across the Scheldt, but troops were still pouring over the bridges, while the roads which led down to those bridges were covered with cavalry and infantry as far as the vision could extend. It was but too evident that the entire army of the Allies was passing the river. Hautefort, already cut off from the main body, could take no better course than to save his men by a rapid retreat. The Allies pursued and inflicted some damage upon his rear-guard before the short day closed in. They saw no more of the French. What had become of the myriads of Burgundy and Vendôme was a marvel to them. With the loss of only sixty men, Marlborough and Eugene had achieved the passage of the Scheldt, had snatched from the French commanders the fruits of three months' labour, had dissipated in an hour all their sanguine hopes of starving the Allied army, and now stood within a day's march of Brussels.*

And what were the French commanders about while these important events were transacting? In perusing military operations it must constantly occur to the unprofessional reader that the blunders and negligence of one party have a greater effect in deciding the fate of a battle or a campaign than the skill and activity of the other. The glory of one commander resolves itself when examined into nothing but the monument of another commander's errors, and the hero would be impossible but for the blockhead. Had Darius charged with his cavalry at the battle of Issus, instead of running away, the world would perhaps have never rung with the fame of Alexander. Hannibal's disposal of his forces at Cannæ was no doubt ingenious; but the folly and presumption of Varro must have ensured the defeat of the Romans had the Carthaginian been a general of ordinary capacity. The chances are that Cæsar would never have enslaved the world had Pompey possessed sufficient strength of mind to act on his own judgment, and avoid a battle. The bloodless forcing of the passage of the Scheldt added greatly to Marlborough's reputation. The secrecy and promptitude with which he assembled his troops, the celerity of his

* Campagne de Flandre; St. Simon.

march, the care which he bestowed upon every part of his arrangements, and the pains he must have taken to procure accurate information of the number and position of the bodies who might oppose him, are doubtless worthy of high praise. Yet it is difficult to imagine how the passage could have been achieved had not the French generals been in a kind of enchanted sleep. The head-quarters of Burgundy and Vendôme were then near Tournay. Vendôme, it seems, received intelligence that the Allied army was assembling on the Lys. A suspicion that an attempt would be made on the Scheldt crossed his mind, and he dispatched a mesage to Burgundy, acquainting him with the intelligence, and requesting him to be in readiness to march on the following morning. The Prince was on the point of retiring to rest when the message came. There were not wanting among his counsellors some who urged him to assemble his troops, and depart forthwith; but a more courtly section persuaded him that there was no occasion for immediate action, and Burgundy was too glad to follow their advice and go to bed. He was sitting at table the next morning over a luxurious and protracted breakfast when the tremendous news arrived that the Allies had crossed the Scheldt. For a few moments the Prince seemed overwhelmed with regret and shame; but soon his countenance brightened up. The misfortune had occurred: there was no remedy for it now, and it was idle to grieve when grief would be unavailing. The pupil of Fenelon finally did honour to the philosophical teaching of his preceptor by departing to Tournay and diverting himself with a game at tennis.*

The immediate effect of the passage of the Scheldt was the relinquishment by the Elector of the siege of Brussels. His Highness had received notice of the assembling of the Allied army on the Lys, and had formed a shrewd guess as to the design in contemplation. He determined, however, to make a dash for so important a stake. Without bestowing much time on breaching the walls, he ordered his troops to assail the counterscarp, and the impetuosity with which the brave fellows endeavoured to execute his commands went near to carry the city. All through the night of the 26th the struggle proceeded

* St. Simon.

with equal gallantry and devotion on the side of the storming parties and of the garrison. For a few hours a portion of the glacis was actually in the possession of the French. On the following day, however, came the news of the approach of the Allied army, and the Elector decamped with so much speed as to leave his wounded men and his cannon on the field.

Another consequence of the passage of the Scheldt was that it quickened the surrender of the citadel of Lille. Eugene returned immediately to his post, and Marlborough was able to transmit to him in a few days an ample supply of powder. No time was lost in informing Boufflers of the fresh success which had attended the Allied army. The Marshal was invited to send an officer to satisfy himself of the abundance of means for the reduction of the citadel which the besiegers now possessed. Yet Boufflers, although at the end of his ammunition, and very nearly at the end of the horseflesh, upon which he and his soldiers had been for some time subsisting, still thought fit, at the risk of incensing the Allies, to give them a little more trouble. Hope of preserving the fortress there could be no longer any; and he had received a letter from his sovereign complimenting him upon the bravery he had shown, yet counselling him to make terms. It seems, however, that his pride was too fastidious to surrender before the last pound of food had been devoured. On the 8th of December, at length, his drums beat a parley. Terms of capitulation highly honourable to the garrison were accorded by Eugene. The admiration of that generous commander had been powerfully excited by the sturdy defence made by men who, he knew, received scarcely sufficient nourishment to enable them to mount guard on the walls. Boufflers and his staff, after being sumptuously entertained at the Allied head-quarters, were sent off with every mark of respect to the French army.

That army was now, in pursuance of express orders from Court, in process of distribution into winter quarters. Louis, it seems, insisted upon taking this step contrary to the urgent representations of Vendôme. The Marshal divined that, late as was the season, and great as his adversaries might find the difficulty of retaining their troops in the field, Marlborough and Eugene would not feel satisfied in bringing the campaign

to a close without making an attempt to recover Ghent and Bruges. As Louis, however, was determined, Burgundy and Vendôme took their leave of the army, and departed to ascertain what kind of reception they would meet with from their sovereign and their countrymen, after their exploits in the Netherlands. A strong reinforcement was sent to the garrison of Ghent. The officer who was selected to act as commander was Lamothe, the same whose blunders at Wynendale had been the means of promoting his antagonist Webb to the rank of a lieutenant-general in the service, and to that of a hero in society. Chamillart wrote to the Count, reminding him of his recent failure, and urging him, as he valued his master's favour, to endeavour to obliterate all recollection of that unfortunate affair by a gallant and steady defence of Ghent. The letter was intercepted by the Allies, but was duly forwarded to its destination.

More reasons than one, in fact, incited Marlborough to retake Ghent before bringing the campaign to an end. In the first place he was meditating an invasion of France for the ensuing year, and the entire overthrow of the French power in the Netherlands would leave him at much greater liberty in forming his plans. It is, probable, however, that the considerations which had most weight with him were not of a strategical kind. The loss of so great a commercial emporium as Ghent had been sadly deplored by the politicians of Holland, and to keep the States in good-humour was a matter which unceasingly occupied the thoughts of Marlborough. Still more necessary was it to remove from the discontented spirits of the British Parliament any pretext for asserting that the loss of Ghent and Bruges outweighted the advantages of the campaign. The hero had been somewhat encouraged by an incident which he looked upon as affording a happy augury for the session. Upon the very day the Parliament met the Allies forced the passage of the Scheldt.

Nothing but the high spirits which unvarying success had inspired in all ranks could have influenced German officers, who were absolute slaves to routine, to permit their troops to continue in the field after October, nor German soldiers, who were the merest mercenaries, to be willing to expose

themselves to the hardships and, indeed, to the sufferings of a winter campaign. Yet officers and men on this occasion yielded to their commander's wishes without a murmur. Ghent was invested, and in spite of its strong garrison and of the means which Chamillart had taken to fortify the heart of its governor, surrendered in twelve days. Lamothe's courage failed him the moment he saw the batteries of the enemy in a condition to open fire. Upon the fall of Ghent, Bruges was voluntarily abandoned by the French.*

* Ghent surrendered on the 2nd January, 1709. Marlborough says (January 3), "It is astonishing to see so great numbers of good men to look on and suffer a place of this consequence to be taken at this season with so little a loss." According to the Campagne de Flandre Lamothe entered into a capitulation for the sake of preserving the garrison.

CHAPTER III.

THE campaign of 1708 had been prolonged far into the winter months, and had terminated only with the year. It had certainly been a proud one to the Allied nations engaged in the work of humbling France. As far indeed as the humiliation of France was an object of the war, that object was already accomplished. All that intolerable lustre which the genius of Turenne, Condé, and Luxemburg had shed upon the French arms, had disappeared under the hands of Tallard, Villeroi and Vendôme. The wretched forces of Spain had never in the proudest days of Louis stood in greater awe of his soldiers, than his soldiers now stood in awe of the Allied armies. They had been constantly beaten, invariably outmanœuvred. Their leaders, although generally possessing a preponderance of force, had never been able to impede the Allies from marching whithersoever they pleased, from besieging and taking such towns as they desired to have, from drawing convoys half across the Netherlands, from entering their lines, from forcing the passage of broad rivers the banks of which they had been engaged for months in fortifying. In this part of Europe there can be no doubt that the Allies had established a complete ascendancy over the soldiers of France.

And yet, notwithstanding all this success in a military point of view, it may be doubted whether the cause of the Allies was in reality prospering. The only fair standard by which to estimate the value of military triumphs is the degree of pressure they put upon the people or the rulers of the beaten country to make peace. Was Louis more anxious for repose, more willing to make sacrifices to obtain this blessing at the end of 1708, than he was at the end of 1706? He had then offered that his

grandson should give up either Spain or Italy. But his offer had been refused. Nothing, it seems, would content the Allies short of his summoning Philip to return home as simple Duke of Anjou. Was it possible that the King who had, during three-fourths of his lifetime, regarded himself as the most puissant monarch in Europe, would submit to so intolerable a mortification? Was there not every chance that, where both the pride and the domestic feelings of a selfish autocrat were concerned, he would continue the contest until either his own subjects rose against him, or the Allies got weary of the expense and bloodshed the war entailed upon them? It may be said, indeed, that his longing for peace was really so desperate that, had the Allies succeeded in driving Philip out of Spain, he would probably have welcomed this as the best solution of his difficulties. His enemies would then have accomplished their task without having humbled him in the sight of the whole world. But unfortunately the Allies managed their affairs in Spain worse than anywhere else. During a brief time it had seemed likely that they would get the upper hand; but their overthrow at Almanza had reduced their power in the Peninsula almost to nothing. In that country where alone a decisive victory might have terminated the war, fortune had gone entirely against them.

The opinion, however, entertained by the most clear-sighted man of this age as to what would follow such a year of success as the Allies had enjoyed in the Netherlands, is indicated in a remarkable manner. Marlborough at this period seems to have thought that Louis, at the end of his resources and perhaps even in alarm for the safety of his own person, was on the point of yielding everything.* A suspension of arms would probably ensue before the armies reassembled in 1709, and he perhaps felt that it would be a graceful termination to his career if he, who had throughout directed the war, should be the first to facilitate the return of peace. He wrote secretly to his nephew Berwick. The present conjuncture, he said,

* Marlborough to the Duchess, July 16—27, says, "I shall labour with pleasure the rest of this campaign in hopes it may be the last, so that I may be blest with you and quietness." December 10—21, he continues, "If God bless us with the taking of this place (Ghent) and a good augmentation be made, I think a good peace must follow before the middle of next summer."

was highly appropriate for entering upon negociations for peace. If his Majesty would communicate to the States, to Prince Eugene, and himself the offers he was disposed to make, his influence should be exerted towards their being accepted. This proceeding was doubtless irregular; but it was no new thing for the generals of these times to attempt to anticipate the work of diplomatists. The Elector of Bavaria had formerly made an application to Marlborough of much the same nature and in much the same style as that which Marlborough now made to Berwick. It happened, however, that Marlborough wrote from Lille at the time when Vendôme was boasting of having circumvented the Allies, and was confidently predicting that they would soon be in a starving condition. His letter, therefore, upon being forwarded to the French Court, was interpreted simply as an acknowledgment of the peril in which he stood; and Berwick was instructed to answer proposals, which he himself considered to be kindly meant, in terms which he was almost ashamed to put on paper. That his uncle regarded himself as being in danger from any arrangements of Vendôme, he did not for a moment believe; and the private letters of Marlborough at this period to his friends in England leave us in no doubt that, whatever was his motive in writing to Berwick, it was not from any apprehension he entertained of the French armies.*

Few changes had occurred during this year in the relative position of the belligerents in Spain. In truth, the war in the Peninsula was smouldering for lack on both sides of sufficient fuel. Galway had early in the spring sailed back to Portugal to resume operations on the western frontier of Spain. The favourites of Charles were but too glad to be rid of a general whom they regarded, as they before regarded Peterborough, as a spy and a curb upon them; and Galway was equally rejoiced to escape from the solemn impertinence of the Germans. Stanhope, who had hitherto acted as ambassador at the Court of Charles, was appointed Galway's successor in the command of the forces in British pay, and found himself

* Mémoires de Berwick. He says, "Je suis même persuadé que cela fût principalement cause de l'aversion que le Duc de M. montra toujours depuis pour la pacification."

at the head of a few thousand men distributed through the different towns of Catalonia, very ill provided with military requisites, disgracefully ragged, and emaciated by the effects of climate and diseases chiefly brought on by a deficiency of proper food. To Stanhope, who although well versed in the art of diplomacy, had as yet had but little experience in warfare, was joined a colleague in the person of Count Staremberg, who had been sent by the Emperor in the place of the desired Eugene to lead the Imperial regiments. Without possessing any extraordinary aptitude as a commander, Staremberg was a careful, painstaking officer, highly esteemed by his own countrymen, and he landed in Catalonia with an excellent reputation acquired during many arduous campaigns in Italy. The aggregate strength which these two generals could muster was about ten thousand men. With an army which would in the Netherlands have been deemed barely sufficient as an escort to a train of provision-waggons, or as a foraging party, it was of course useless to think of retrieving the affairs of the Allies in Spain. Had the French indeed been in a condition to profit by the weakness of Staremberg and Stanhope, the army would soon have had to betake itself to the fleet, if by good fortune the fleet had been off the coast, or to surrender as prisoners of war. But a combination of circumstances kept the French inactive far into the summer months. Berwick had been recalled: Orleans remained in command of twenty or five-and-twenty thousand men, hardly worthy of being called an army, because wanting every requisite of an army, and in no slight danger of perishing by starvation. The Duke was in great straits for money. Promised supplies from France had failed him, for the Ministers of his uncle were too busy in meeting the requirements of the northern armies to pay much attention to the armies of Spain. It was utterly vain to apply for assistance to Philip, who could scarcely extract from his subjects enough to meet the expenses of his establishment. No merchant in his senses would give credit either to the King of Spain or to the King of France; and in the midst of the Duke's distresses, a fleet of vessels coming from Toulon with provisions for his troops fell into the hands of Sir John Leake. At length he raised upon his plate and jewels a sum by means of which

he partially equipped his men. He then took the field, laid siege to Tortosa, and carried that town at the end of a month, the Allies not having ventured to interfere with his operations. But with this conquest he was forced to be contented. The Allies received soon afterwards a reinforcement of Imperialists from Genoa. Orleans, on the other hand, was compelled to send a part of his army against the Duke of Savoy, who had invaded Dauphiny.*

The Allied commanders had now breathing time, and proceeded at once to turn it to account. Information had been received from Sardinia that Philip's viceroy there was unpopular; that the islanders were generally in favour of Charles, and were ripe for revolt. Leake accordingly made sail for Cagliari. That town made a show of resistance; but a few bombs thrown among the inhabitants so quickened their sympathies for the Austrian sovereign, that they rose against the garrison and threw open the gates. The whole island at once submitted to Charles, and the Admiral succeeded in extracting from the people a not unimportant supply of corn, and horses enough to remount the cavalry regiments in Catalonia.†

This matter arranged, Leake set sail for the Balearic isles to co-operate with Stanhope in a project which that gentleman had long had at heart, which he had frequently urged upon the Ministers at home, and of which Marlborough had signified his hearty approval. Ever since the establishment of the Allied troops in Spain, it had been regarded by military men as a most vexatious circumstance that, as soon as the summer began to wane, the Admiral of the Mediterranean fleet always declared it to be essential for his safety to return to England. He would not, he said, expose his ships to the dangers of narrow and tempestuous seas without having a single good port to which he could repair for shelter. The departure of the fleet never failed to depress the spirits of the abandoned troops. Six months, they knew, must elapse before they were cheered again by the sight of an English ship. If the French came upon them in great force during this time, the best they

* Lettres Historiques; Lord Mahon's History of the War.
† Boyer; Lettres Historiques. The capitulation was signed August 13.

could hope for was to be made prisoners of war. If the natives turned their backs upon them they ran a risk of being starved. The acquirement, therefore, of some harbour in which the fleet could securely pass the winter months would prove to the Allies the greatest of blessings. There were few such harbours in the Mediterranean; but of those few, Port Mahon, in the island of Minorca, possessed some natural advantages superior to those enjoyed by the others. In the long and narrow gulf, which runs up to the town, a large fleet might lie, sheltered on each side by high ground, in seven fathoms of calm water. There seemed no great difficulty in the way of mastering the island, although the captains of the fleet, always indisposed to regard with favour the projects of landsmen, and perhaps wishing to pass their Christmas at home, affected to look but gloomily upon the enterprise. Stanhope, however, was determined that the attempt should be made, even if the fleet declined all participation in it. He wrote to Leake, informing him that he was about to set sail from Barcelona with eighteen hundred men. The Admiral, now that the only alternative left him was either to second the resolute General or to incur the reproach, which Englishmen would be certain to cast upon him, of abandoning the General to destruction, made up his mind to join in the enterprise, and the two commanders, having united their forces, sailed for Minorca. The cannon and troops were set on shore without resistance from the natives, who, whether through fear or from attachment to the Austrian cause, were certainly not disposed to throw impediments in the way of the invaders. To drag the guns over rocks, and up steep hills, was found hard work; but the cannon once in position to batter the crumbling fortifications of the town, the Spanish garrison very soon surrendered. Stanhope supplied the places of the Spaniards with a purely British regiment. He had reflected deeply upon the uses to which this fine port might be turned in British hands. It would, he remarked, give law to the Mediterranean both in peace and war. It would be to Toulon what Dunkirk had long been to the eastern ports of England. With this island it was his opinion that Great Britain ought never to part; and she had a fair plea for retaining it in her exclusive possession as a pledge for the

repayment of the large subsidies which had been advanced to Charles.*

Probably no sovereign throughout this war endured greater distress of mind than the Pope. Clement XI. was deficient in that modesty which should guide the counsels of a prince who holds his possessions merely by the sufferance of far more powerful neighbours. His fiery temper, conjoined with the high notions he entertained of his spiritual authority, constantly tempted him to provoke monarchs and nations who could at any time overwhelm him. He was one of those priests who, regarding themselves as gods, and mankind but as the slaves of the Church, fail to realise either their own weakness or the advancing ideas of liberty in the human species, until the rude hands of men are about their throats. Yet the unquenchable ardour with which the deluded old man still fought on for Louis XIV. when almost every other ally had deserted him, the vigour with which he launched his spiritual thunderbolts, and the energy with which he bustled about to raise a few troops to keep the sacrilegious Imperialists out of his States, inspire us with a kind of compassionate admiration. He had braved the wrath of England by putting up prayers for the Pretender, and had to thank the mercy of that Power, or more probably his own insignificance, that an English fleet had not in requital made its appearance before Civita Vecchia. But the Emperor, less generous, or more strongly tempted, than the Ministers of Anne, availed himself of the excuse afforded by Clement's partisanship to make some attempts upon the Pontifical States. The Pope had persistently refused to acknowledge the title of Charles as King of Spain, had dismissed without an audience priests who came to him with nominations to benefices under that Prince's hand, and had permitted the consort of Charles to pass through Italy without sending a legate to pay her the usual compliments. Joseph was but too glad of such pretexts as these for putting in execution some designs which, had they proceeded from an ordinary man, the world would pronounce mean and discreditable. He instituted an absurd claim to the Duchies of Parma and Placentia, and to Commachio in the Ferrarese, which had

* Letters of Stanhope quoted by Lord Mahon; Boyer; Le tres Historiques.

been regarded as fiefs of the Church for upwards of a century. He pleaded his case after the usual manner of despots, by taking military occupation of Commachio. It was in vain that the Pope cursed and excommunicated the impious invaders, that he raised his standard in St. Peter's, that he went in solemn procession to the castle of St. Angelo and extracted from the hoard deposited there by Sixtus V. for the direst occasions of the Church five hundred thousand crowns to equip an army, that he shrieked for assistance to the princes of Italy, to the Catholic cantons of Switzerland, and to his eldest and stoutest son, King Louis of France. His anathemas were unheeded, his troops fled at the mere sight of the Austrians, his money was soon spent, and none of the potentates, his earthly friends, cared or were in a condition to give him help. The haughty priest at length perceived that he must yield to superior might. The Emperor was at the same time made sensible that the course he was pursuing gave general offence to Europe. Terms were arranged between the Holy Father and Imperial Cæsar, his loving son; and Clement, reluctantly abandoning the cause of France, despatched a nuncio to the Court of Charles.*

While the events described in this and a great part of the preceding chapter were passing abroad, matters at home were drifting on towards that revolution which was destined to give peace to Europe sooner perhaps than Europe would have obtained it at the hands of the present Ministers of England and the Whigs. The history of those twelve years during which Anne filled the throne of Great Britain, is, and can be, little besides a biography of Marlborough. That distinguished man, not less gifted as a statesman than as a warrior, was in truth the real sovereign of his country for at least nine out of those twelve years, years during which England attained to an amazing height of power and influence. If it be pleasing to an intelligent and proud people to look back to a time when they appeared at the head of a mighty contest for liberty and marshalled princes and nations in her sacred cause, to an era

* There are several biographies of Clement XI., but my notion of him is formed principally from his public actions. Boyer; Tindal; Burnet; Lamberty.

of splendid victories, to a period when the greatest military power in Europe was humbled to the dust by their energy and prowess, the memory of Marlborough will surely be remembered with affection, his merits dwelt upon with delight, his failings forgotten for the sake of the inestimable services he rendered to his country and to mankind. It was his destiny in life to execute the vast designs of William, and his power, while at its zenith, was in many respects greater than William's. He had not, like that prince, to encounter a House of Commons frequently inimical to his projects, and almost always hostile to his own person. The war and himself were alike popular. Supplies were never stinted, and of those supplies he had the uncontrolled disposal; for Anne, upon such matters, interfered little, and Godolphin seldom disputed the judgment of his friend. But it cannot be that in a free country a single subject should absorb into his hands the whole power of the State without exciting the jealousy of a host of politicians. The original scheme of Marlborough had been to form a small party of friends, standing aloof from both the great factions of Parliament, but ready to dispense the royal favour impartially between moderate Whigs and Tories as occasion arose. Had the scale remained equally poised between the two factions, or had it preponderated in favour of the Tories, the government of Marlborough would probably have lasted until the death of Anne. But fortune inclined it to the side of the Whigs, and the difficulties of the hero became every year more embarrassing. His alternative lay between displeasing the Queen or setting the Parliament against him. To be constantly teasing her Majesty to do violence to her feelings by admitting men who were odious to her to be Secretaries of State and Privy Councillors, was to sap the foundations of his position. Yet if the Whigs were not satisfied, the Government might be brought to a standstill, vexatious inquiries set on foot, the supplies withheld, and the war stopped.

Anne was not only becoming each year more unmanageable, but it now scarcely admitted of a doubt that she was guided by the advice of counsellors more congenial to her ways of thinking than her responsible Ministers. This state of things would

perhaps not have occurred had the Duchess been a woman of ordinary temper and discretion. But that extraordinary being was a monument of unchangeable folly. No subject, except perhaps a mediæval jester, surely ever stood so little in awe of a sovereign. She could not avoid seeing that Anne's affection for her was gone, that a rival had supplanted her, that her Majesty was sick to death of her humours; yet she continued to scold on with more violence than ever. Sometimes the shrill tones of the lecture Mrs. Freeman was administering in the closet would penetrate to a scandalised audience in the antechambers. Those ladies who accompanied Anne upon the day when she went in State to St. Paul's to return thanks for the victory of Oudenarde, were witnesses of a strange scene. There had been a dispute that morning between the Queen and the Duchess about the jewels her Majesty should wear. The Duchess, who could not imagine that Anne rebelled against her dictation of her own accord, set down her Majesty's obstinacy to the prompting of Mrs. Masham, and was in great wrath. She continued her reproaches in the coach, while Anne was engaged in acknowledging the homage of her subjects, and her rage had not spent itself by the time the procession reached the cathedral. In the solemn pauses of the thanksgiving service she had still a few taunts to whisper in the ear of the Queen. Anne was commencing a reply, but was promptly told to hold her tongue. Either the Duchess did not choose that the quarrel should degenerate into a dialogue, or she entertained a just fear that, if excited, her voice would rise in that sacred edifice above the strains of organ and choristers. Accustomed as was Anne to the habitual insolence of her old favourite, she never forgave this outrage.*

Marlborough would sometimes venture with great mildness and humility to point out to his wife that, when differences arise between friends, reproaches and recriminations only serve to make the breach wider. He might as well have tried to teach a hurricane to be gentle. Mrs. Freeman evidently thought that the understanding and affections of Mrs. Morley were her property, and that when the use of them was with-

* Coxe's Memoirs, and the correspondence between the Queen and the Duchess on this matter.

held from her she suffered a grievous wrong. The Whigs ought, in her opinion, to have all they asked for, and if the Queen was too much of a fool to see the justice of their demands, she should be lectured into a wiser frame of mind. To her husband she occasionally dealt out a sharp word that cut him to the heart, for being too lukewarm in pressing the claims of the statesmen she had graciously taken under her protection. Marlborough had, in truth, tried every form that decent expostulation could take to induce her Majesty to modify her opinions respecting persons and parties. During the summer and autumn there had been several interchanges of letters between Anne and himself. They were written on the side of the Queen in that style of friendly equality which Mrs. Morley always employed when addressing Mr. Freeman, and Marlborough replied in a tone of earnest but always respectful remonstrance against the course her Majesty was pursuing. Anne affected not to understand how she had given cause for complaint. The letter Marlborough had written to his wife with the news of the victory of Oudenarde had been shown to her, and one expression it contained tempted her to write for an explanation. He professed his thankfulness for being the instrument of so much good to the nation and to the Queen, if the Queen would make use of it. What did he mean by this? She was sure she would never make an ill use of so great a blessing: she would to the best of her understanding make the best use of it she could: she would be glad to know what use he would have her make of it. Marlborough, after apologising for the hastiness of his expression, answered that his meaning was that she could make no good use of that or any other blessing except by following the advice of the Lord Treasurer, and discarding all other counsellors. To this Anne penned a rejoinder which reiterated the substance of what she had frequently said before. There was nobody, she protested, with whom she did advise but himself and the Treasurer. But she had said this so often that she began to fear Mr. Freeman had no longer a good opinion of her, and if that was the case, it was useless for her to say anything. Why must it be thought so extraordinary if she sometimes refused to comply with what was desired of her? Could not she be of one opinion and her

advisers of another, without its being always imputed that she was influenced by Mr. Harley?*

That Anne, in thus emphatically repudiating the charge of listening to other political advisers than her Ministers, was telling the truth, or at least what she conceived to be the truth, is by no means improbable. But Marlborough gave to the assertions of his wife a credit which no judicious historian of the present day would think of yielding, and seems to have had no doubt that the Queen was prevaricating. It was at all events clear that it was beyond the power of argument to convince her Majesty of the necessity of according more favour to the Whigs. Godolphin, weary of talking and remonstrating, and terrified by the menaces of the discontented party, began to find his life a burden to him; and even Marlborough was forced to admit in sadness that there was no washing a blackamoor white. It was not from the conduct of Mrs. Masham and Harley alone that the Duke entertained apprehensions. There were three members of his own family, having access to royalty, whose folly was perpetually engendering fresh entanglements. His wife was an outrageous Whig, whose tongue it was impossible to restrain; Sunderland, his son-in-law, was a rash and ill-tempered Whig, who could scarcely be persuaded to a decent forbearance with the perverseness and stupidity of Anne; George Churchill, his brother, was a Tory, constantly saying or doing, or inciting Prince George to say or do something which gave high offence to the imperious Whigs. Early in the year there had seemed every probability that Anne, highly provoked by the quips and sarcasms upon the Tories which Sunderland could not refrain from uttering even in the royal presence, and by the rampant Whiggism he had displayed in canvassing for his party in Scotland, would summarily dismiss that nobleman from his post of Secretary. This danger, which was agitating Marlborough during those critical days which preceded the battle of Oudenarde, passed over; but it was a mournful thought to the hero that his relation, instead of endeavouring, as Cowper had done, to win the confidence and regard of the Queen, should be obstinately bent on increasing

* The Queen to Marlborough, July 13—24; Marlborough to the Queen, July 23, August 3; August 2—13.

her detestation of him. Sunderland was, in truth, a self-willed man, little inclined to be dependent on or even to receive advice from his modest but wise father-in-law. His ties to his party were stronger than his ties to the great family of which he had become a member. He believed that the Duke was not acting honourably by the Whigs, that he was playing a double game, that he still remained a Tory at heart, that his professions were hollow, that he would do nothing for the party he was not forced to do. Somers, with whom Sunderland corresponded, was of the same opinion. It was, in fact, inconceivable to the whole bevy of eager and disappointed statesmen that Anne could persist in refusing any demand which so indispensable a servant did really and sincerely urge her to grant.

As the time approached for the assembling of the Parliament Godolphin's uneasiness on account of the Whigs increased. Again and again Patroclus wrote to Achilles, then engaged before Lille, begging him to leave all and return to England, if his stay were but for eight-and-forty hours. Nothing but ruin was to be expected unless Mr. Freeman had a personal interview with Mrs. Morley, and could talk her over into complying about Somers. The elections had taken place during the summer, and Marlborough's prediction had been verified. The Whigs had been more than commonly successful. The spirits of the leaders were immensely elated. The threats they held forth were of a kind well calculated to inspire terror in Anne. It was reported to her by Haversham that Parliament would again be moved to send an invitation to the Electoral Prince of Hanover to take up his residence in England. The morbid horror with which Anne shrank from beholding any member of the family which was to succeed her, was universally known. Her gratitude to the Whigs and her resentment against the Tories upon the last occasion when this subject was mooted, had gone near to convert her to those opinions respecting parties which the Duchess had so vainly laboured to inspire. And now, it seemed that her former protectors were to be her oppressors, and that her friends would be powerless to help her. Another threat peculiarly adapted to give pain to Anne was that the attack would be resumed upon those who had the direction of naval affairs. The year had indeed given rise to

no events which could justify a renewal of those censures which had been formerly passed upon the Admiralty. No merchant had made fresh complaints as to the insufficiency of cruisers or the difficulty of procuring convoy. A great increase of vigour had, on the contrary, been shown in every department of the maritime service. The rapidity with which that fleet had been fitted out which enabled Byng to frustrate the invasion, went far in impartial minds to atone for previous neglect and supineness. Both in the Mediterranean and the West Indies there had been achievements worthy of the English flag. Leake had conquered Sardinia and assisted in the conquest of Minorca. Commodore Wager had, after four hours of intrepid fighting against what seemed overwhelming odds, captured, sunk or dismantled a squadron of heavily armed and richly-laden Spanish ships on their way to Carthagena. But the Whigs, it appeared, were too bitterly incensed against the Government to notice such matters. It was rumoured that they would not be content merely with forcing the obnoxious George Churchill from the Council. The Prince himself was to be compelled to resign. His post was wanted for Pembroke. Why, it was whispered, should a man who not only had never possessed the least fitness for the place, but who had for years past been incapacitated by illness from devoting the least attention to it, be entrusted with the control of the most mighty engine of British power?

Rumours of this kind proved more effective with Anne than the arguments and entreaties of her oldest friends. She showed signs of yielding, and scarcely had she begun to do so when an event occurred which, however sad to herself in a private capacity, rendered it far easier for her to content the predominant party. This was the death of Prince George. His constitution had been slowly breaking up ever since the Queen's accession. He had during many years suffered from an incurable asthma, and had been nursed by his wife with exemplary affection. He expired on the 28th of October. An epitaph in Westminster Abbey simply recording that he was born in 1653 and died in 1708, and enumerating his sounding titles, may be considered a sufficient biography of the consort of Anne. He was a listless, unintellectual man, yet in one respect he merited

the gratitude of the nation. He did his best, and in a way that promised to be more effectual than the foresight of the profoundest statesmen, to secure the peaceable transference of the sceptre to a race of Protestant sovereigns. But Providence so ordered it that none of his numerous offspring survived to maturity.

The death of the Prince occurred at an opportune moment. The Whigs at once abandoned all thoughts of inquiring into the administration of naval affairs. Indeed there was no one left to attack. With the Prince expired his council. The hated George Churchill was no longer in power. It was now fully expected that the control of the navy would be placed in the hands of Pembroke, and this hope was not disappointed. Two days before Parliament met Anne attended a meeting of the Privy Council at St. James's, and signified her intentions. Pembroke was declared Lord High Admiral of Great Britain and Ireland. Of the posts he already held, and which were inconsistent with the performance of the duties of his new place, he was deprived. His office of President of the Council was given to Somers. Wharton was nominated Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, and chose for his principal secretary Joseph Addison. The promises which Godolphin had made to the graceful writer had been honourably fulfilled. Since 1705 Addison had been in the service of Government as Under-Secretary of State, first to Hedges, and afterwards to Sunderland.

The Whigs seemed now for a time contented, and Godolphin found himself suddenly delivered from the fear of a stormy session. The new Parliament was opened on the 16th of November by commission, when Sir Robert Onslow, a Whig, whose grandfather had pressed Cromwell to assume the crown, was, after running the gauntlet of some ironical compliments from the Tories, elected Speaker. The speech, which was delivered by Cowper, was, as usual, Whiggish in its tone, and was little more than a reiteration of those sentiments which had fallen from the royal lips in preceding years. Her Majesty declared that it appeared impossible to her that representatives of the British nation could endure to lose the fruits of past endeavours by submitting to an insecure peace. The Commons were exhorted to bear their part in

augmenting the troops in Flanders, and to add to the strength of the fleet.

As soon as the customary addresses of condolence for the death of the Prince and of congratulation for the success of her Majesty's arms abroad had been presented, the Lower House proceeded with readiness and perfect unanimity to its special duties. The circumstances that the estimates made by the last Parliament, although amounting to more than six millions, had fallen short of the actual expenditure by upwards of three hundred thousand pounds, and that the estimates for the year 1709 reached nearly a million more than the estimates for 1708, did not seemingly produce discouragement. The subsidies to Allies were voted on the usual scale. Twelve hundred thousand pounds were allowed for augmenting the forces in Flanders. The whole amount granted by the Commons fell little short of seven millions.

But by what ways and means this great sum should be raised was a question that required consideration. The receipts of the Treasury at this time appear to have been far less than they had been two or three years previously. The customs had largely declined; the inland revenue was collected with a difficulty that proved the uselessness of augmenting taxation. It is probable that the entire income of Government at this period did not much exceed four millions, so that nearly three millions were required to cover the deficiency between the possible receipts and expenditure for the forthcoming year. Nor could it be reasonably hoped that, so long as the war lasted, the annual deficiency would ever be less than this sum. Yet the credit of the Government continued unimpaired in the city. Had the Chancellor of the Exchequer proceeded after the old fashion to the great emporium of wealth, and raised a loan from house to house by giving tallies in exchange for money, there can be little doubt that his requirements would in a very short time have been satisfied. But since the establishment of the Bank new and more convenient forms of borrowing had dawned upon financiers. It was now seen, first, that from the coffers of the Bank might be drawn by a single transaction a sum which it would take days to collect in the old manner; and secondly, that the credit of a flourishing com-

pany might be advantageously employed to set in circulation Exchequer-bills, which were now issued in place of the old and clumsy security of tallies. It was of essential importance, however, that the stability of the Bank should be placed beyond all doubt. Its failure would be to the Government a grievous disaster; for independently of the loss of an useful friend, the twelve hundred thousand pounds which had been originally lent by the shareholders would have to be repaid. That such a catastrophe might well happen in times of great political excitement had been sufficiently demonstrated in the recent panic. Plans were, therefore, discussed between the Ministers and the authorities of the Bank, and the result was that, in the spring of 1709, certain proposals were submitted to the House of Commons. The governor and company undertook to advance a further sum of four hundred thousand pounds to the Government, and also to float Exchequer-bills to the amount of two and a half millions, upon condition that their charter was renewed for an additional twenty-one years, and that they should be permitted to double their capital stock by new subscriptions.

These proposals the Parliament at once accepted. Persons were appointed by royal commission to take the names of subscribers, and at nine in the morning of the 22nd of February they attended with their books in Mercers' Hall. The new stock was to be taken at fifteen pounds' premium, but this price the public did not think too high for the security. No sooner were the doors opened than such a crowd of subscribers poured in that the commissioners were bewildered with the number and eagerness of the applicants. By one in the afternoon it was announced, to the disappointment of many who had failed to get their names down, that the whole required sum of two millions two hundred thousand pounds had been subscribed.*

Two questions relating to the elections of the Scottish representatives to serve in Parliament were decided during this session, and although the debates were attended with much heat and bitterness, it can scarcely be doubted that the judg-

* See the remarks of Boyer on this subject and his gleeful reference to the utter failure of the King of France to establish a royal bank at about the same time.

ment of the majority was an equitable one, and calculated to promote a good understanding between the two nations. In the first place it was determined that the eldest son of a Scottish peer was not eligible to a seat in the House of Commons; and in the second that a Scottish peer, who likewise held a peerage of Great Britain, was not entitled to vote on the election of the sixteen representative peers of his country. A doubt upon the first of these questions would probably not have been raised but for the warm interest taken in the subject by the Scottish nobility. Almost the last act passed by the Scottish Parliament had settled the manner in which the elections of members to serve in the House of Commons should be made, and in that act it was declared that no one should be capable to elect or be elected a representative to serve in the Parliament of Great Britain, except such persons as were capable of electing or being elected representatives in the Parliament of Scotland. For many weighty reasons the sons of Scottish peers had been frequently rejected by the Parliament of their country, when returned as commissioners of shires or burghs. Indeed the widely different points of view from which the Commons of England and Scotland regarded their respective nobilities, form no bad illustration of the past histories of the two nations. In England the aristocratic caste had never, at least, since the time when Parliament became a recognised institution, been regarded with terror and mistrust. The power of an English nobleman amounted, in fact, to little more than that enjoyed by an untitled but wealthy squire. Except his immunity from arrest in civil cases, a peer was as much subject to the law as the humblest peasant. It was felt by the Commons that the same dark shadow cast by the Crown involved both him and themselves, and that their interests upon the great points of liberty, religion, and taxation were in the main identical. From this it resulted that, when the scion of an aristocratic House stood for a county or borough, no misgivings as to his having an interest opposed to the common good prevented the electors from choosing him for their representative. But a very different state of things had always prevailed in Scotland. The power of the Crown was weak: the privileges assumed by the nobility virtually constituted each nobleman

an absolute monarch in his own domains. Generation after generation grew up in awe of a being accustomed to set at defiance King and Parliament, nay, whose whole life was one constant outrage on the fundamental laws of society and civilisation. It would have been strange, therefore, if such a being had not been regarded by the peacefully inclined inhabitants of towns as a public enemy with interests utterly opposed to their own, and if they should not have refused to be represented in Parliament by any member of his family, of his tenantry, or, indeed, by any one over whom he might be supposed to have an influence.

Upon the other question, the right of a Scottish peer holding a peerage of Great Britain to vote on the elections of the sixteen representative peers, the decision was also given in the negative, principally, it should seem, on grounds of expediency. It is not easy to comprehend the justice of the argument that when a peer of Scotland is made a peer of the United Kingdom, his privileges as a peer of Scotland suffer extinction. But the importance of preserving every member of the House of Lords on a footing of perfect equality is intelligible enough, and it is clear that if a member, sitting in his own right, had a voice in electing another member, his influence would exceed that of his brethren.

Throughout the session, indeed, the attention of the Houses was, upon one pretext or another, constantly recalled to Scotland. Upon no other subject was it possible for the Opposition to pretend so much indignation, to make so many covert allusions, to deal such keen home-thrusts at men in power as upon this. Haversham, in his annual critique upon the occurrences of the past year, spoke with his usual bitterness upon the subject of the arrest of the persons suspected of being in complicity with the scheme of invasion. The facts of the case wore, in truth, a most suspicious appearance. Between Queensberry and Godolphin there had long been a close political alliance. It was Queensberry's province to manage the Scottish elections in favour of the Court, that is to say, in the interest of the Marlborough party, and his exertions to that end had given deep offence to the numerous enemies of that party. The unsuccessful attempt of the Pretender had furnished him with

just the pretence he needed for indulging in arbitrary proceedings. It could not have happened at a more fortunate time for his plans. Two months more, and that Privy Council, of which he was the soul, would have expired, and no resource would then have remained to him but to influence the elections by the ordinary means of bribing and promising. Suddenly he found himself, by the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, invested with boundless power, and he proceeded to use it with what most men considered the shamelessness of a partisan. In a few days every Scotchman, peer or commoner, whose return to Parliament seemed probable, and whose antecedents rendered his joining the lists against the Government a not unlikely event, was in custody—Hamilton, Athol, Gordon, Belhaven, Lockhart, Fletcher, and a host of others. Some of these gentlemen had undoubtedly been privy to the scheme of invasion, but proofs of their complicity there were at that time none, and fifty years passed before the testimony of Hooke revealed who actually were the guilty parties. Against the majority of Queensberry's captives not a tittle of evidence could be brought, and many of them were, as we now know, perfectly innocent. Care was, however, taken that they should not be released until the fate of the elections had been decided. After two months' confinement in Scotland they were sent up to London for examination before the Privy Council. Sunderland at once exerted his interest to procure the release of Hamilton, in whom he nourished a strong hope that the Whigs would find a friend, and Hamilton got back to Scotland just in time to secure his election. But most of the other prisoners were not discharged until it was certain that they could make no disagreeable use of their liberty. Belhaven, who, although an uncompromising and frantic opposer of the Union, of Queensberry, and of the English Government, appears to have been guiltless of any transactions with St. Germains, obtained his freedom only in time to die of brain fever outside the walls of the Tower. Indignation against his persecutors and despair of his country's future had been too much for the excitable temperament of this unfortunate nobleman. Against only five persons who, deluded by a false report that the Pretender had landed, actually appeared in arms with their followers, could

a case be made out; and these persons were sent back to Scotland to undergo their trial in conformity with Scottish usages.

To the infinite vexation of the English Ministers, but very much to the satisfaction of the Scottish people, all these five persons were acquitted. There could be no doubt in English minds that the laws and procedure of Scotland in relation to treason were not defined with sufficient accuracy. This was no pleasant discovery to make. In a part of the United Kingdom exposed without defences to invasion, and inhabited by a population that was replete with disaffection, it seemed that a man might, with a little aid from a judge who was a stickler for half-obsolete forms, and from a jury which would be certain to sympathize with his offence, commit treason with perfect impunity. The importance therefore of altering the Scottish criminal laws in this respect appeared clear: but the matter presented some difficulties. To force upon the Scotch the horrible treason laws of England would be certainly regarded as a high-handed proceeding, and perhaps as an infringement of the conditions of the Union. There was, however, no alternative between risking the displeasure of the Scotch, or leaving the whole island in jeopardy. The Ministers determined upon the former course, and a recommendation was thrown out in the royal speech to assimilate the criminal laws of the two kingdoms. A bill to extend the English laws relating to high treason to Scotland was introduced to the Commons; but the opposition to it appeared so formidable that it was dropped. The subject was then taken up by the Lords. A similar bill passed their House in spite of a vehement protest from all the Scotch sixteen, was sent down to the Commons, and eventually passed that stage also in spite of the opposition of the Scotch forty-five. An amendment was, however, carried that softened to a considerable extent the intolerable harshness of the English law. Burnet had striven with his accustomed benevolence to teach his colleagues that to turn children out as beggars on the world for the offences of their fathers, was to take a tyrannical and unreasonable vengeance upon the innocent for the crimes of the guilty. With all his eloquence, however, he was unable to carry his point. There was a general opinion,

and it was held by Somers, that the fear of injuring his offspring would act as an additional restraint upon the father. This mitigation of the penalties of treason was now accorded by the lower House. A clause introduced into the bill enacted that the forfeiture of the estate which followed on attainder should not be for a longer period than for the life of the attainted. An exemption of the Queen's subjects from torture, still a necessary provision for Scotland, was also inserted.*

Together with this act for improving the Union a much-needed act of grace received the Royal assent. It was, according to custom, sent by the Sovereign to the Lords, was by their House thankfully accepted and passed, and was then sent down to receive the formal and respectful concurrence of the Commons. All offences committed by her Majesty's subjects before the 19th of April, 1709, were, with certain specified exceptions, pardoned by this act. The object was to deliver those numerous persons who had perpetrated treason by corresponding with the Court of St. Germains, from the fear of being one day called to account for their crime. To neither Marlborough nor Godolphin could this act be said to be a superfluous defence; yet there seems no ground for imputing to them any extraordinary personal interest in the matter. Such an act they could have easily procured at any time since the commencement of the reign. At the present conjuncture, when the minds of many Scotchmen were disturbed by the consciousness of having committed treason and the fearful penalties now imposed upon the crime, the appearance of an act of grace was well timed.†

One act which became law this session was an interesting experiment in statesmanship. Under its provisions any Protestant alien, who took the oaths of allegiance and supremacy before proper officers, became, without any further ceremony, entitled to all the rights and privileges of naturally born subjects. It is singular that public attention was not more drawn at the time to a measure which might be expected to produce greater changes in the framework of English society than any step ever taken by the legislature. The only real

* 7 Anne, c. 21; Burnet; Boyer; Lettres Historiques.

† Burnet remarks, "The Ministry, for their own sakes, took care that it should be very full."

opposition to the bill came from a section of the Tories, who objected that an influx of foreigners, by swelling the ranks of the Dissenters, might prove dangerous to the supremacy of the Church. How this argument failed to produce its customary effect upon the masses of Church-loving squires who still crowded the benches of this House of Commons, it is not easy to imagine. The religious scruples of the majority were satisfied by simply prescribing that the applicant for naturalization should produce a certificate from the minister of some Protestant or reformed congregation that he had once taken the Sacrament. It may be idle to speculate upon what might have been the consequences of this act, had it remained in force for any length of time. It can hardly be but that the whole tone of English life, the habits, morals and religious predilections of Englishmen would, whether for good or evil, have been greatly altered. Even the States of the great American Republic have generally considered it prudent to enjoin a residence of at least a year in the country as a condition preliminary to the possession of the franchise. But under the statute of Anne a foreigner, wholly unacquainted with the laws, the language, the peculiar notions and feelings of Englishmen, might in a single day qualify himself to elect or be elected a member of Parliament. The rash act was repealed three years after, when the Tories succeeded to power, and no subsequent Parliament has ventured to recur to similar principles.

One of the effects of another act also passed during this session was to fill princes and diplomatists all round Europe with amazement. In England, it seemed, neither the power of the Sovereign nor the laws of the land extended to inflicting punishment upon parties who, in the eyes of all foreign jurists, had committed a most heinous crime. An ambassador from Peter the Great had been for some time in the country, and had contracted some small debts with tradesmen, not amounting altogether to three hundred pounds. In July his creditors were alarmed by hearing that he had taken his formal audience of leave. Notice had been indeed sent them that a Muscovite merchant would attend in the city on a certain day, and would settle all claims upon his Excellency; but this promise did not suffice to dissipate their apprehensions. A meeting of creditors

was held. The general opinion was that the Ambassador meant to be off without paying his debts, and the indignant tradesmen determined not to give the foreigner a chance of swindling them. To commence an action for debt, to sue out a capias was in that age the work of an hour. Before the Ambassador had received the slightest warning of what was to happen, the writ was executed upon his sacred person. His coach was stopped by bailiffs in the Haymarket: a man sprang into the vehicle, and collared him. Not unnaturally imagining that he was set upon by thieves, he struggled vigorously with his captors, and a large crowd having gathered to witness the scuffle, the sheriff's myrmidons thought it best to drag their prisoner, his coat torn, his sword broken, and his hat and wig knocked off, into some refreshment-rooms. The crowd, however, having dispersed when it became known that nothing more unusual had occurred than the arrest of a gentleman for debt, a hackney coach was summoned, and the Ambassador was conveyed to a dirty public-house, called the Black Raven. It was evening, but he at once despatched a messenger to the Secretary's office. Walpole immediately waited upon him, but to the stupefaction of the Muscovite professed his regret that it was beyond his power to effect his immediate release. There was nothing for it but to wait patiently till the morning, when the courts would be sitting, and bail might be tendered in the usual manner. The representative of the proudest and sternest monarch in Europe was consequently compelled to pass the whole night in captivity. In the course of the following day he was set at liberty, and wrote to the Government in a tone of justifiable indignation. His arrest, he averred, was a deliberate insult upon the honour of the Czar. He protested against such a violation of the law of nations, and he demanded that all who had been concerned against him should be severely punished.

The case was reported to Anne, and there was a discussion at the Privy Council as to what should be done under these extraordinary circumstances. If such a violation of the universally conceded immunities of ambassadors were suffered to pass unnoticed, the whole world would cry shame on England. Yet, on the other hand, it was most doubtful whether those who had been concerned in the arrest had committed any

offence which the law could reach. It was probably the first instance of the kind that had occurred. There had been some small theorising upon the subject by English jurists; but it was not apparent that there was anything in the common law, and there was certainly nothing in the statutory law, which recognized any privileges whatever in foreigners. The most august monarch of the Continent, the awful Peter or the magnificent Louis, might find his shoulder invaded in the streets of London by the paw of a sheriff's bailiff. It was, however, decided to send the case for trial. The Attorney-General was instructed to exhibit an information in the Queen's Bench against the prosecuting creditors, their attorney, and the bailiffs, and all the parties accused were forthwith committed to prison. Meanwhile the most soothing apologies were tendered to the Ambassador; but it was found impossible to make him understand why such miscreants were not immediately beaten to death, hanged, or at least set in the pillory. He thought that the Ministers were trifling with him, retired from the kingdom in a rage, and laid his complaint at the feet of Peter. A despatch in due time reached Anne couched in precisely such terms as might be expected from the despotic barbarian. He demanded that capital punishment should be inflicted upon the sheriff, the tradesmen, the lawyers, the bailiffs, and every one who could be found by the most diligent search to have had any participation in the crime.

The case was tried before Holt and a special jury, and the accused were convicted of the particulars laid to their charge. But Holt abstained from passing sentence. It was his province to administer, and not to invent, laws and punishments. The prisoners, in consequence, were set at liberty. But to prevent the repetition of such an occurrence an act was now passed by the Parliament to declare null and void all writs and processes sued out against an Ambassador or his registered servants. With a copy of this act a special envoy was despatched to the Czar, and was instructed to assure his Majesty that, although the Queen had no power to inflict upon any of her subjects a punishment that was not warranted by law, the offenders lay under her high displeasure, and were branded throughout the country as notorious criminals. Peter was mollified by

these endeavours to propitiate him, and returned a gracious answer.*

Quiet as the session had been through the preponderating influence of the Whigs, it had not, however, passed off without some rancorous growls from the Tories. Haversham was, as usual, the orator of his party, and his speech this year abounded with taunts against the Ministers. He concluded his harangue with a motion for documents by which it might appear at what time the first intimation of the projected invasion was received, what orders were issued, and what was the state of the defences of Scotland. The perusal of these papers could leave doubt on no impartial mind of the utter absence of all provision in Scotland against invasion. At the very time that the French squadron was off the coast, Leven was bewailing to Mar that the insufficiency and almost naked condition of his men, joined with the circumstance of his being without a farthing of money, left him no resource but to retire into England if the Pretender landed south of the Forth. How long three of the principal fortresses of the kingdom, Stirling, Dumbarton, and Blackness could have resisted the assault of regular troops was not difficult to calculate. Of the three, Stirling was the only one provided with powder; and the supply of Stirling was limited to one barrel. Dumbarton Castle was in ruins; and the utterly destitute condition of the few men who constituted its garrison might suggest the explanation that their very existence had been forgotten by the Government. The united armouries of all Scotland might have furnished about one thousand old muskets, many of them without ramrods, and not a few with broken stocks and locks. Haversham descanted bitterly upon the sad picture of neglect revealed by these papers. "If better care be not taken for the future," he sagely remarked, "it will be the greatest miracle if, without a miracle, the Pretender does not reach this throne." Yet he deservedly failed in an endeavour to fasten the blame upon the English Ministers. Nothing could be more apparent than the causes which had led to the decay of the defences and of the military establishment of the northern kingdom. Such had been for years the state of

* The details of this case are given in Boyer and the Lettres Historiques.

public feeling in Scotland, that any attempt at improvements in this direction would most certainly have excited a rebellion. With or without a reason, however, the Whigs had made up their minds to stand by the Ministers. From the Lords Haversham failed to extort any vote of censure. The Commons showed still more zeal in their defence; and, in a series of resolutions expressed their approbation of the conduct of those employed by her Majesty in repelling the invasion.

To oppose the usual vote of thanks to Marlborough after a campaign so brilliant, would have been useless; yet the Tories were not satisfied without mingling some drops of gall with the compliment. Nothing delighted them more than the springing up of some hero during the year to divide the honours with the Commander-in-Chief. In the great year of Blenheim the name of Rooke had been coupled with Marlborough's so preposterously as to bring down upon the party the contempt and derision of the whole country. They had then lavished applause upon Peterborough in the hope of inducing the nation to shift its admiration to a new idol. The fortunate warrior who was now taken up by the Tories was Webb. Some injustice had been at first done to him. In the first accounts which reached England of the action at Wynendale, and which were inserted in the *London Gazette*, no mention whatever was made of Webb. It was stated that the troops which beat off Lamothe were under the command of Cadogan, who did not, in fact, reach the ground till the combat was over. It may be gathered from Marlborough's private letters that, when this relation was framed, it was not accurately known in camp whether Webb's corps or Cadogan's, or both had borne the burden of the fighting.* But it was enough for malicious critics that Cadogan, to whom the praise had been precipitately attributed, was Marlborough's known favourite. No reason can be imagined why the Duke should knowingly trick out this officer with plumes of which it was certain he would be speedily stripped; and of which, in fact, he was immediately despoiled by Webb, who was anything but indif-

* In a letter to Godolphin, October 1—12, four days after the affair, Marlborough remarks, "Webb and Cadogan have, on this occasion, as they always will do, behaved themselves extremely well. The success of this vigorous action is, in a great measure, owing to them."

ferent to his own glory. The Tories, however, chose to impute the mistake to his Grace's partiality. A vote of thanks was obtained for Webb, and some not very complimentary allusions were made to Webb's superior. "I observe with grief," remarked Bromley, "that a certain commander upon whom not only the thanks of both Houses, but also great rewards, have been bestowed, seems nevertheless to be yet unsatisfied." It was not until a month afterwards that the thanks of the House were voted to Marlborough.

The votes of the repentant Whigs had saved that Government of which Godolphin was the head. A quiet session had passed where a stormy one had been anticipated. The supplies had been voted on the most liberal scale; and so far all was well. Yet the Treasurer was far from being a happy man. Constant walking among pitfalls had shattered the nerves of a mind which had not been originally of the strongest metal. The taunts and sneers of the Tories drove him almost to distraction. He could not endure the black looks of Mrs. Morley. What schemes she and her maid were concocting with the dreaded Harley he scarcely dared imagine. To add to his wretchedness there were Whigs who cruelly and perversely persisted in believing that he was fostering Anne's predilections for the Tories. In this frame of mind he kept longing for Marlborough's return as a sick child pines for its nurse. Nothing could go well till Mr. Freeman was again in England. "A slave in the galleys," he wrote to his friend, "is in paradise compared to me. At first the business of the campaign would not let you come; then the States-general would not let you come; and now it must be God Almighty that hinders you."* At length his wish was gratified. Upon the 1st of March Marlborough, after an absence of eleven months, again set foot in England. Never had his return created greater interest, for the rumour had spread far and wide that he was the bearer of proposals for peace.

The report was well founded. The once magnificent despot, humbled by great misfortunes, without confidence in his generals, scarce able to supply his soldiers with bread, and with subjects who could only respond to his appeals for money by

* Godolphin to Marlborough, January 10—31.

one deep groan of agony, was again striving with his whole heart to obtain rest from his pitiless persecutors. How completely had been the revolution effected by Time! The great Louis, who for half a century had dictated terms to the princes of Europe, was now suing humbly for peace, was willing to make the most ample restitution to every power he had had the ill-luck to offend, to concede towns to petty sovereigns upon whose necks he might but a few years back have set his foot—all upon the mere condition that utter degradation might be spared his grey hairs. If it be wisdom in conquerors to seize the moment for arranging terms when the enemy is prostrate, exhausted, and in despair, it is plain that that moment had now arrived for the Allies. It was scarcely possible that a brave, industrious, numerous, and loyal population could fall to a lower degree of wretchedness than that which the French had now reached. But peace was not yet to be; and it remains to be shown how the Allies, some blinded by arrogance and others by cupidity, permitted this golden opportunity to slip, and how at length a turn of fortune came and they deservedly lost the fruits of ten years of successful warfare.

As soon as the campaign closed Louis had, through private channels, re-opened negotiations with some of the leading statesmen of Holland. Such were, in truth, the circumstances of his position that he could see none but such methods of negotiating left him. To the Emperor he felt it would be useless to apply. The case of Joseph resembled that of a gambler without means. He might win largely: he had nothing to lose by continuing the war; and so long as his good Allies chose to bear the expense he cared not if the contest lasted till the day of judgment. England had certainly little cause for the extreme inveteracy she had evinced. But the Parliament had as yet shown no symptoms of a desire for peace. Marlborough was still, to all appearance, in the zenith of his power and popularity. The acceptance or rejection of any overture for peace would, in all probability, depend chiefly upon him; and Louis entertained a deep conviction that Marlborough would for his own interests strive to prolong the war. Among the parties of the Republic, however, there was always some encouragement to be found. The King heard that even his

most bitter enemy, the Pensionary Heinsius, was becoming reasonable, that he thought France now sufficiently reduced in power, and that the time had arrived when it would be for the advantage of the Republic to arrange conditions. Under these circumstances Louis felt himself warranted in making a private application to the Pensionary for passports for an accredited envoy; and the passports were granted, although in a secret manner.*

The person selected by Louis for conducting negotiations with the Dutch was Rouillé, a merchant who, although he had never yet been invested with the character of an ambassador, had frequently given proofs of his abilities as a diplomatist. The nature of his instructions showed how much in earnest the King now was. Rouillé was expressly charged not to stickle about small matters, to examine too closely the powers of those with whom he conferred, and not to make long speeches. Time was precious. In three months, if there was no cessation of arms, the war must recommence. His Majesty, he might say at once, was willing to abandon Spain, the Indies, the Milanese, the Netherlands: he would concede large commercial advantages to the Dutch, and such a barrier as must remove all their apprehensions on the side of France. The only fragment of the immense inheritance of Charles II. he desired that his grandson should retain was the kingdoms of Naples and Sicily, and, if too much objection were not made, the island of Sardinia.

Rouillé's first interviews were with Pensionaries Buys and Vanderdussen. The conferences were held in an obscure village, and were conducted with almost as much secrecy as men would have used who were plotting an insurrection. The Dutchmen had no authorization to treat; but Rouillé was satisfied with the knowledge that his antagonists were men of high and influential position, and the business proceeded. After a few meetings his Majesty's proposals were reduced to a definite form. Buys and Vanderdussen then thought it advisable to take Marlborough's private opinion upon them. From him, however, nothing could be obtained beyond a promise to submit the proposals to the Queen. Large as were the offers of

* Mémoires de Torcy.

Louis, it is plain that Marlborough was for rejecting them. "I am far," he said, writing to Godolphin, "from thinking the King of France so low as he is thought in England. Every town on the frontier is full of his troops; swarms of his cavalry occupy every village and farmhouse between the Sambre and Meuse."* It was undoubtedly true that Louis, while using his best endeavours to obtain peace, was preparing with his usual activity for the very probable event that the war might continue. Godolphin imparted the French proposals to Somers and the other chiefs of the Whig party. They at once and unanimously pronounced them insufficient. In truth, they felt that the war was essentially their war, and that the reputation of the party was involved in obtaining a complete triumph. Every letter which reached England from abroad brought fresh accounts of the fearfully exhausted state of France, of the bankruptcy of the Treasury, the starving condition of the people, the depression of trade, the almost total extinction of manufactures. By these relations they were much elated. Generosity towards a fallen foe was not a feeling that found place in any Whig breast; nor was it to be wondered at that there should have been no inclination to be generous towards a tyrant who had kept Europe in a tremor for half a century. It was the general opinion of the party that nothing more was needed than a march into France to frighten Louis out of the small remains of his arrogance and obstinacy. It was thought proper, however, in regard to these overtures for peace, to obtain from the Parliament an explicit declaration as to what would be required by the English Government. An address to her Majesty was therefore carried through the Upper House to request that provision would be made in any treaty for the recognition of her title by the King, for his guarantee of the Protestant succession, and his compelling the Pretender to quit his dominions. To this address the Commons added the recommendation that the demolition of the fortifications and harbour of Dunkirk should be insisted on.

When Marlborough, after staying but five weeks in England, returned to the Hague, he took care to be furnished with instructions such as could not fail to extinguish the hopes of

* Marlborough to Godolphin, February 13—24.

Louis.* He was charged, in addition to insisting upon the demands of his own Government, to recall to the recollection of the States the sentiments so often expressed by the British Parliament that no peace could be safe or honourable unless the whole of the Spanish monarchy were restored to the House of Austria. Of the policy of Great Britain, so accordant as it was with all the wishes and schemes of the Emperor, Eugene, who had returned from Vienna, of course expressed his cordial approval. The Savoyard Minister, whose master was hoping to secure something out of the spoil of the sick lion, linked himself to the two generals. Heinsius, however, thought their views so unreasonable, that he seriously advised Marlborough to keep them a secret if he wished to avoid exciting a ferment in the Republic. So far indeed as the interests of the Dutch were concerned, the terms which Buys and Vanderdussen had succeeded in extorting from Rouillé, left them no motive for continuing the war; and the Pensionary could not but regret that his countrymen, who had already suffered severely, should be required to prolong the contest merely for the benefit of the Emperor, whose concerns were nothing to them, and who had done scarcely anything to promote the common cause.† For the first time Heinsius and Marlborough were at variance. Not improbably a suspicion was rising in the breast of the Dutch statesman that his mistrust and detestation of France had hurried him into doing more than was prudent towards establishing in his country the ascendancy of England.

From the moment Marlborough and Eugene arrived in the country, Rouillé became convinced that all hopes of concluding peace upon reasonable terms were at an end. The tone in which Buys and Vanderdussen had hitherto treated with him, resembled that a couple of pitiless usurers might employ towards a needy spendthrift. But now their demands became, in the envoy's opinion, thoroughly outrageous. Louis had been frequently communicated with, and town after town had been wrung from him. But as yet nothing had been said about Lille, and Rouillé had taken it for granted that the Allies meant to restore that city to France. He could not for

* The instructions are given in Coxe's Memoirs.
† Marlborough to Boyle, April 12—23.

one moment imagine that, under any pressure, his master would consent to the abandonment of a place which was at once the bulwark of his kingdom and the principal glory of his reign. The Dutchmen now undeceived him with a cruel sneer at his credulity, which almost drove the envoy mad. It appeared then that all these conferences with Buys and Vanderdussen had been but loss of time, that he had not been dealing with persons who could be considered as principals. There were other extortioners behind them still more grasping than themselves. Some of the demands which would be made on behalf of the other members of the Confederacy were now communicated to him. The demolition of the harbour of Dunkirk, he was told, would be regarded as an indispensable condition of peace. Strasburg, and several other towns on the eastern side of France, must be given up to the Emperor. Exilles and Fenestrelles would be required for the Duke of Savoy. He was also informed that Philip's retaining any part of the Spanish dominions was quite out of the question. It is not strange that when Rouillé transmitted to the King these new demands of his enemies, he should have despaired of his mission.*

Yet Rouillé, well as he may have known Louis XIV. in his pride, was quite unaware how completely the heart of that mighty despot had been humbled by adversity. The accounts which had been received as to the condition of France, and which had spread a cruel exultation through England and Holland, had not been exaggerated. In addition to the long train of evils which had been brought upon that fine country by a protracted war, France was then suffering under a special plague which had reduced her people to extremities such as are endured by the inhabitants of the plains of Bengal when there is a failure of rain. In the beginning of 1709, a frost set in of extraordinary duration and severity. Its rigour was felt through the entire temperate region of Europe, in England and the Netherlands, in the greater part of Germany, and in the north of Italy. The seaboard, from the mouths of the Rhine to the mouth of the Loire assumed the appearance which is exhibited in winter by the coasts of Labrador and Newfound-

* Mémoires de Torcy.

land. Every river brought down masses of ice, which for immense distances on either side of its outlet clung to the shore. Carriages drawn by six horses passed between Rotterdam and Moerdyk, and between the islands of Zeeland. A fair was held on the Thames at London Bridge. On the hardy vegetation, however, of England and Holland, an unusually severe winter never inflicts much damage. It was in countries blessed with a sunnier climate, producers of wine and oil, that the consequences of this divergence of Nature from her ordinary course were most severely felt, and in no country were the consequences so terrible as in France. The closing weeks of 1708 had been so mild that the trees of the Palais Royal were in leaf at Christmas. Upon the 5th of January, a frost began of such unparalleled intensity that Hungary-water froze in the boudoirs of Versailles, and that in a few days the Seine was passable by heavy waggons from its source to its outlet. Then there came a thaw. The snows which thickly covered the ground were melted: the rivers were unlocked: immense tracts were inundated; and then it suddenly recommenced freezing as hard as before.* Every province of France was involved in the same calamity. The vines of the Bordelais and of Burgundy, the olive-trees of Provence and Languedoc, the glowing orchards which are everywhere the pride of the French cultivator, perished together. The seed-corn left in the ground perished likewise; and this misfortune, which was general throughout the country, occasioned forebodings of a famine, which, assisted by some silly interference of a meddling Government, speedily swelled into a frightful panic. The price of bread rose rapidly above the means of the poor, whose corpses were frequently seen in the streets. Hunger occasioned riots in most of the towns; and so many starving wretches, undeterred by a profusion of new gibbets, infested the highways as to render travelling all but impossible. In Paris the distress was great. The population which swarmed in the filthy dwellings of the city fell victims by thousands to hunger and cold; and even those families whose means still secured them from the experience of actual want, were tortured by a sharp commercial crisis. The two principal bankers of the kingdom, the

* St. Simon; Torcy; Villars; Lettres de Madame de Maintenon; Boyer.

famous Monsieur Bernard and Monsieur Nicholas, were compelled, early in the year, to suspend payment through the King's inability to return the immense sums he had borrowed or rather extorted from them; and their failure of course involved the downfall of some fifty inferior houses. At Lyons, a notice was issued by the entire mercantile community postponing the day upon which engagements fell due. Coin was fast disappearing from circulation, driven out by the ever-swelling floods of paper money, Treasury and Mint bills, which, in spite of threatening edicts, kept falling daily in value until no man could form a guess of what he was worth. One advantage, however, sprang even from the excess of misery. There was no lack of recruits to follow the bread-waggons of the army. But by what means the Government, with exhausted credit and diminished revenues, contrived from time to time to replenish those waggons, is a question that has been found not a little puzzling. To Desmarests himself, the controller of finance, the thing seemed a miracle.* Fresh issues of paper, further debasement of the coinage, loans contracted at unprecedented rates of interest, account to some extent for the circumstance; but it cannot be doubted that what principally supported the French armies through the ensuing campaign, was the noble endurance, the patience under dreadful privations exhibited by the soldiers.

Rouillé's report of the new demands of his antagonists was read in a mournful council of the ministers. There was a touching scene, so touching that Torcy, who was present, thought himself not permitted to relate it. It seemed that Peace but mocked the efforts of those who were pursuing her with so much earnestness. The Ministers felt the inability of the kingdom to continue the war, and strengthened each other for the performance of the disagreeable duty of impressing upon his Majesty the advisability of submitting to the demands of his enemies, however insolent they might be. But Louis had already made up his mind, and needed no soliciting. He at once directed that an answer should be sent to Rouillé, authorising him to consent to fresh sacrifices. Maubeuge, Dunkirk, Tournay, Lille might be abandoned one after the other. His

* Forbonnais, Recherches sur les Finances.

Majesty would be content if but the single kingdom of Naples, separated from Sicily, were assured to his grandson. The one consideration which was never to be absent from the thoughts of the envoy was, that his Majesty wished for peace.

It was now the close of April, and every day was precious. In a few weeks, it might be in a few days, the Allies, who waited only for a change in the weather, would recommence operations. Under such circumstances the inexpediency was manifest of leaving a negociation of such vital import in the hands of a person but partially admitted to the confidence of the King, and who would naturally fear to overstep by a hair's breadth the precise limit of his instructions. If it should happen that Rouillé again found himself under the necessity of communicating with Versailles, it was more than probable that the war would be resumed before an answer could reach him. Torcy now stepped forward to relieve the fears of his master on this score. He would go himself to the Hague and treat with the Dutch deputies. There was no time to apply for a proper passport. It was true that every road in the Netherlands was swarming with troops, but he would take his chance with the passport of a common courier. Louis, after some consideration, accepted the offer of his devoted minister.*

* Torcy; St. Simon.

CHAPTER IV.

Torcy set off immediately, and after a narrow escape of being arrested on the road by zealous officials, reached the Hague on the evening of the 6th of May. He had revealed himself to but one person on his journey, a French banker at Rotterdam; and by this gentleman he was now guided to the unpretentious dwelling of the Grand Pensionary. Heinsius was overwhelmed with astonishment when he learned the name of his visitor; but he received him with kindness, and at once entered into a discussion of the business which had brought the Marquis to the Hague. He had no power, he said, to negotiate; but he would summon Buys and Vanderdussen, the properly-authorized deputies of the States, who, he doubted not, would treat with him upon the same footing as they had been treating with Rouillé. A conference was accordingly held the next morning between the Frenchman and the three Dutchmen, and was followed by several other conferences to which Rouillé was invited at Torcy's request. The astute Minister soon formed an opinion of the characters and views of his antagonists. Heinsius, grave and collected, spoke always to the point and politely. Buys, on the other hand, was constantly exciting himself, flew from one subject to another, and was given to make long speeches which protracted the sittings, and too frequently rendered them fruitless. Vanderdussen was mild and kind in his demeanour, said very little, and seemed content with echoing the opinions of Buys. The Frenchman observed, however, with deep mortification, that there was one sentiment in common between all three. They were convinced that the Allies were masters of the position, that France was too much reduced to offer any opposition to their armies, and that they might dictate therefore what terms of peace they chose. Upon

the subject of the barrier, the only one about which Torcy thought it possible that the Dutch could feel any real interest, he laboured with all his might to bring matters to a conclusion before Marlborough, who, he learned with some satisfaction, had gone for a short time to England, should return. If the Dutch could be gained over before the evil genius of France was again among them, he felt that a considerable advantage would be obtained. He allowed himself, therefore, to be driven to the limit of his powers as quickly as the decencies of diplomacy would permit. Maubeuge, Tournay, even Lille, were all successively abandoned, the anxious envoy hoping that, in return for such large sacrifices on the part of his Majesty, the Dutch would pledge themselves to use their influence in obtaining for the King some abatement of the claim put forward by the other members of the Confederacy for the surrender of the whole of the Spanish dominions. But on this point the deputies steadily refused to hold out any encouragement to him. The States, they coldly observed, were bound by their treaties. Torcy could not comprehend why the Dutch, when offered every object which they could possibly win by fighting, should still be willing to continue the war merely to subserve the pretensions of the Emperor, of England, and of two or three small Powers in whose concerns they had no interest whatever. What difference, he frequently urged, could it make to them whether the kingdoms of Naples and Sicily were given to Philip or to Charles? The Emperor's objections to give up any part of Italy were intelligible enough.

It was likewise conceivable that the English, who drove a fine trade to the Levant, might think their position imperilled by any increase of the French power in the Mediterranean. But the Dutch could be concerned in no way about the government of so remote a place.* The truth seems to be that the political atmosphere in which Torcy had been educated had deadened his sense of honour. He could only wonder that the Dutch should be such fools as to observe faith towards their Allies when they could get nothing by their fidelity. His most Christian Majesty had a much keener perception of his own interests. His statecraft was a model to princes and

* Mémoires de Torcy.

nations. No one could observe a treaty better than he so long as it was to his advantage; but he never hesitated to repudiate it when it suited his convenience to do so.

Before Torcy could prevail upon the Dutch to accept the King's offers, a favourable wind brought Marlborough back to the Hague. He was accompanied by Lord Townshend, a Whig nobleman, whose name, afterwards so highly distinguished, now appears for the first time. The fullest powers to treat on behalf of England had been confided to the pair. Torcy lost no time in waiting upon the man whom he considered the supreme arbiter of peace or war, and Marlborough received him with a profusion of friendly professions that astonished but failed to deceive the experienced diplomatist. The bland and courteous hero had a thousand confidences to impart to the Minister of Louis. He could not sufficiently express the profound respect and attachment he bore to the person of his Majesty. It was his hope that he might one day merit his favour. As regarded peace, he would say that he himself was longing for it; but people in England were so unreasonably set on war, so convinced that their interests lay in completing the ruin of France, and that they had the power of effecting their desire. It was true that the nation did contain some wiser men, who thought, as he did, that this was the time for making peace; but unhappily these persons had no influence. He must earnestly recommend the King to offer no opposition to the demands of the Allies. The hand of God had been so visibly on their side. How otherwise could it have been possible for an army composed of soldiers from eight different nations to have thought and acted like one man? *

Upon one point Torcy was exceedingly desirous to have an understanding with Marlborough. Of all the demands made by the Allies there had been none which had given more pain to Louis than the English requisition that he should expel the Stuarts from his kingdom. He was anxious to learn whether, if the Queen Dowager left France, the English Government would pay her pension. At the bare mention of the exiled

* Mémoires de Torcy. This French statesman had formed a very low opinion of Marlborough's morality, and was offended by the frequent repetition he made of God's name in his conversation. "On était tenté de lui dire, pourquoi ta bouche profane ose t'elle citer ma loi?"

family the hero was overcome by his emotions. There was nothing, he declared, for which he more ardently longed than an opportunity of serving the Prince of Wales. He was the child of a king for whom he would once have laid down his life. But he was cruelly hampered. Townshend had been joined in the commission for the express purpose of watching him, and he cautioned Torcy that, when this nobleman was present, he would be necessitated to speak like an obstinate Englishman. But it was the wish of his heart to serve the exiled family, and he hoped that the King of France would make such a stand upon this subject as would give him time to be of service. Torcy had been empowered to offer a bribe to Marlborough proportioned to any abatement his influence might obtain in the claims of the various Powers; but he seems to have considered it useless to broach the subject at this interview. At a subsequent conference he intimated to the Duke that his Majesty was well informed of his correspondence with the family of James, and that his Majesty's sentiments towards him had undergone no change. The meaning of these words is not obvious. They may have referred to some promise of reward long since made by Louis to Marlborough on condition of his exerting his influence to obtain a restoration of the Stuarts. Marlborough, however, reddened, and changed the subject.*

The result of Torcy's interviews with Marlborough must have impressed the Frenchman with the conviction that the Captain-General had not his equal as a diplomatist among the children of men. He had visited him privately in the hope of penetrating what Marlborough's views really were. But upon that smooth and polished soul there was nothing upon which worldly cunning could fasten. The hopes which had hitherto buoyed up Torcy in his conferences with the plenipotentiaries now began to wane. He had by this time received his sovereign's permission to surrender every part of the Spanish inheritance, and still he was in despair of contenting his antagonists. In the Dutch, indeed, he thought he could perceive a

* A bribe was apparently offered to Marlborough, and declined. "Il est vrai," says Torcy, "que lorsque je parlais de ses intérêts particuliers, il rougissait et paraissait vouloir détourner la conversation."

desire of closing with the King's offers, but it was evident that the Dutch either could not or would not separate their cause from that of their allies. At every meeting the English, the Dutch, the Imperialists, the Savoyards, the Portuguese, seemed to be all banded together. Every claim by one member of the Confederacy, however harsh it might be, was supported and insisted upon by the whole phalanx. The Emperor, instead of being satisfied with Strasburg, now wanted all Alsace. The King of Portugal judged this the time for obtaining some concessions in the Brazils. The English required that the squabble, which had been going on for centuries between the French and English fishermen of Newfoundland, should be settled by the whole island being formally ceded to Great Britain. But it was reserved for a prince, the ancient ally, or rather the humble dependent, of France, and personally connected with Louis by a double marriage tie, to inflict the blow which was most acutely felt. The Duke of Savoy insisted that two towns in Dauphiny, which he had captured in the last campaign, Fenestrelles and Exilles, should remain in his possession. The importance of the places was perhaps not great; but the demand was the agonizing kick of the ass at the sick lion, and Torcy struggled long and strenuously, but in vain, to save his master this extreme humiliation.

The continual occurrence of fresh demands so distracted the French Minister that he at length requested Heinsius to reduce into writing the conditions upon which the Allies would consent to a cessation of arms, in order that his master and himself might at length know the worst. This the Pensionary undertook to do, and in a few days handed to Torcy a document containing the demands of the whole Confederacy in forty articles. It is unnecessary to relate in further detail the claims of the Allies. The articles which ultimately led to the indignant rejection of the whole series by the King, were the third and fourth. By the third Louis was to recognise Charles as King of Spain, the Indies, the kingdoms of Naples and Sicily, and generally of all the states and provinces dependent upon the Spanish crown, except those portions which the champions of Charles thought fit to reserve for themselves. By the fourth article it was stipulated that, if by the end of two months

the Duke of Anjou had not signified his assent to these terms, his Christian Majesty should, in concert with the other princes and Powers concerned, take measures to ensure their being carried into effect. In other words, Louis was required to bind himself, in the event of his grandson refusing to resign the crown of Spain, to join the Allies in compelling him to do so by force of arms.

It may well be doubted whether the persons who framed this last condition had any expectation that it would be accepted by the King, whatever notions they may have formed of their own power and of the exhaustion of France.* The character of Louis for pride, especially where his family was concerned, was as well known to the men of that generation as it is known to the student of our own time. Was it possible that a monarch who, although now greatly reduced in power, was still the despotic ruler over some fifteen millions of souls, would consent, at the bidding of his enemies, to join in hunting his own grandson out of the kingdom to which he himself had sent him but eight years since? It is true that the matter presented great difficulties to the framers of the conditions. All the Allies regarded, or affected to regard, the wresting of the Spanish dominions from Philip as necessary to the repose of Europe. Louis had signified his readiness to assent to this measure, and to use his best endeavours to obtain the acquiescence of his grandson. But was it likely that Philip, after having been a king for eight years, would, at the request even of that grandfather of whom he stood in so much awe, lay down his crown and meekly return into France as a subject? The chances were strong that he would refuse to obey, and that force would be necessary to expel him from Spain. The war in that case must continue. There would be peace only as far as France was concerned. The very person who had caused all the conflagration would be enjoying the luxury of repose, while the Allies were pouring out more blood and treasure in a struggle to conquer the Peninsula.

* Marlborough himself was in favour of the Allies demanding some cautionary towns instead of insisting upon these articles. See the Mémoires de Torcy; letters of Marlborough, May 27, June 7; June 16—27. In a letter of August 26, September 6, he says, "I do not think it in the power of the French king and his ministers to oblige the Spaniards and the Duke of Anjou to submit to the preliminaries."

The contingency that Philip might refuse to abdicate had given rise to a good deal of discussion during the conferences. The Dutch seem to have been of opinion that Louis could, if he were really in earnest, make his grandson act as he chose. But the King of France was now reaping the reward of that policy which had caused him to be branded through Europe as the most faithless and unscrupulous of sovereigns. No one was disposed to rely upon his mere promise. Heinsius suggested as an alternative to the fourth article that the King should, until the provisions of the third article were fully carried out, place in the hands of the Allies six towns, three in France and three in Spain. Torcy repelled the proposition with indignation. His Majesty, he declared, would do his best to induce his grandson to abdicate; and if at the expiration of three months he continued to disregard his recommendation, he would withdraw his troops from Spain, and would bind himself to furnish him with no assistance of any kind while the Allies were engaged in the work of expelling him. It was unreasonable to expect that he should do more. He could not make himself responsible for the course which the King of Spain might adopt.

The plenipotentiaries, however, adhered to their conditions, and the forty articles were despatched to Versailles. Torcy, in a letter to the King, ventured to express a strong hope that the affairs of his Majesty would permit of his rejecting them. He himself, in haste to confer with Louis, followed quickly upon his messenger, leaving Rouillé at the Hague to receive and report the determination of the King. The plenipotentiaries, meanwhile, whatever their private expectations might be, thought it desirable to encourage the reports which now filled England and Holland that peace might be looked for with certainty. No one expressed himself more hopefully on the subject than Marlborough.* The public delusion was dispelled at the end of eight days, when Rouillé was able to announce the King's decision. It was such as any person acquainted with the character of Louis, and with the nature of the conditions offered him, might have anticipated. His Majesty, Rouillé reported, refused to accede to these preliminaries of peace, and should

* Letters in Coxe's Memoirs; Lettres Historiques.

regard as void every concession which his Ministers had made in the course of the negotiations.

Thus the flames of war were to be rekindled all round Europe, merely because the Allies chose to insist upon terms with which no sovereign could, under almost any circumstances of misfortune, be expected to comply. Louis had been willing to bid up to an enormous figure, but he would not purchase peace at the price of being degraded in the eyes of the whole world. The plunder amassed during half a century he was content to disgorge—the important frontier towns of Alsace, his favourite Lille, Dunkirk, bright with visions of the future, from whose harbour was one day to issue a fleet which should redeem France from the reproach of naval inferiority. He would not allow his personal feelings to stand in the way of other sacrifices. He would humbly present two towns of his kingdom to a petty potentate whom the kings of France had been used to regard as a kind of vassal, to that Duke of Savoy upon whose ungrateful and unnatural desertion of himself he could not think without indignation. He would, at the bidding of his enemies, turn away that unfortunate family whom it had been his chivalrous pride to protect. But he would not make war upon his own grandson, nor upon a people whose only crime in his eyes was their fidelity to that grandson. At Torcy's entreaty the King condescended to submit to his subjects the reasons which had induced him to refuse his acceptance to the preliminaries required by the Allies. A circular was drawn up and despatched to the governor of every province in the kingdom, with orders that its contents should be made public. Louis informed his people that all the Allies were willing to grant him in exchange for so large a surrender of towns as must gravely compromise the security of his dominions was a truce of only two months. Such a suspension of arms would be, he said, as costly as and far more dangerous than open war. For if, at the end of the two months, the King of Spain had not retired from his government, the Allies would be at liberty to resume their attacks upon France, when deprived, by her own act, of many of her bulwarks. The proposals made to him that he should join in forcing his grandson to descend the throne of Spain appeared to him so inhuman

that he had difficulty in comprehending that they were intended seriously. He was persuaded that, much as his subjects might wish for peace, they would themselves be adverse to accepting it upon conditions so exorbitant, so insecure, and so degrading to the honour of France.

In the meantime the Allies, equally anxious to clear themselves of the reproach of disappointing the public wishes, had gone through the form of getting the articles ratified by the Queen and the States-general. Every journal in England and Holland suggested to its readers that the King of France had had no other object in opening negotiations than to gain time and to sow dissensions among the members of the Confederacy; and there was no lack of French deserters and prisoners to declare that this had always been their own view of the case.* As the people both in England and Holland had been led to regard the King's acceptance of the preliminaries as almost a certainty, his refusal of them was of course received with a howl of disappointment and rage. The articles were almost immediately made public; but the opinions which were rife in both countries apparently underwent no immediate change. There was not a voice raised to assert that the conditions it was now attempted to impose upon the King of France were such as no sovereign with any remains of power could possibly accept. In truth, neither in England nor in Holland was there the least sympathy for the misfortunes of Louis. A whole generation had been constantly exclaiming against his ambition and his faithlessness; and now that the tyrant was down there was no disposition to show him mercy. Such were at least the sentiments of the dominant Whig party, and to the persistence with which they adhered to them must be ascribed the frustration of a peace which would have been eminently glorious and advantageous to every prince and potentate concerned in the Confederacy. Assuming that Philip did refuse to relinquish the Spanish throne, would it have been so difficult a matter for the Allies to force him to do so without any active assistance on the part of France? Even when Philip had the support of every French regiment his grandfather could spare him, the

* See the bitter remarks in Boyer; Burnet; Oldmixon; and even the Lettres Historiques.

Allies had nearly succeeded in driving him out of the kingdom. If the Emperor, the Queen and the States-general had found themselves at liberty to turn their whole resources against Philip deprived of the only soldiers who had hitherto constituted his strength, who can doubt what the result would have been? In all human probability the King of Spain would have become, before the close of the first campaign, another pensioner upon the hospitality of Louis XIV. Whether the throne of Charles could have been established in place of the throne of Philip, is another question. The Allies may well have found it an impossibility to conquer for him the hearts of the Spanish people; but this would have been not the less an impossibility had the armies of France been added to their own.

The Whigs, however, were determined to try the effect of another campaign upon the obstinacy of Louis. The spirits of the whole party were elated to an extravagant pitch. How otherwise than triumphant could be the career of an army numerous and glowing with confidence, directed by the two greatest captains of the age, assembled on the already dismantled frontiers of France, and looking for no opposition but from troops woefully discouraged, and in danger of starvation through the exhaustion of their sovereign's exchequer!

But it had been decreed that the spring of 1709 should be the turning-point to the miseries of France and to the overwhelming successes of the Allied armies. The spirit of the French nation had been powerfully excited by the letter of the King. It was the first time that that haughty despot had condescended to take his people into his confidence, and the effect of his appeal to their feelings was magical. Nothing, to quote the words of a contemporary, was to be heard but cries of indignation and vows of vengeance. It was the duty of every man, people asserted, to give his whole substance in support of such a war. The courtiers were actually compelled to carry into practice the patriotic sentiments they professed. One nobleman, in his zeal to comfort the King, informed him that he and many of his friends were desirous of contributing their family plate to the public service. His Majesty graciously declared his willingness to accept it; and the example having been once set, was followed perforce by that gay and voluptuous

crowd of rivals who were perpetually contending for the smiles of their master, and who dreaded nothing more than to be thought wanting in love for him. By this means a sum of three millions of livres was raised, which went a little way towards alleviating the distresses of the soldiers. *For the command of his principal army Louis this time made choice of a general who, whatever were the faults of his understanding and temper, was in reality the most reliable officer in the French service. Villars had acquired a host of enemies by his rude manners and immoderate vanity; † but although the fine gentlemen of the court only sneered at him for an upstart and a braggart, Louis himself judged of his marshal with more discernment. The military reputation of Villars was unblemished by a single failure or a weak campaign. By the common soldiers he was almost adored; for he had all the familiar ways without the sloth and disgusting vices of Vendôme, and was in trying times ever to be seen sharing the hardships and perils of the men. During 1708 he had been employed in Dauphiny to keep the Duke of Savoy in check. Towards the close of the year he was summoned to Court and informed by the King that the army of Flanders would be entrusted to his charge. The prospect of having, with an army discouraged by defeat and weakened by hunger, to protect the kingdom against those two great captains who had shivered the reputation of every marshal who had been yet opposed to them, might seem no enviable one. But the responsibility which would have paralyzed the energies of most commanders, seemed only to add fresh spirits to Villars. After a little complacent boasting, which cheered Louis and excited the sarcasms of the courtiers, the Marshal set off to the frontier to make himself personally acquainted with his resources. The spectacle which met his eyes was indeed appalling. The magazines, he informed Chamillart, were quite empty. All the horses of the mounted regiments were in imminent danger of perishing. The soldiers were literally starving, and were selling their arms to procure the means of subsistence. The subaltern officers had for a long

* St. Simon; Lettres Historiques.

† According to the Lettres Historiques Villars said, on receiving the news of the defeat of the French army at Ramilies, "Villars ne peut pas être partout."

time received no pay, and many of them had parted with their last shirt for food. It was under these terrible circumstances that Villars assumed the command of about sixty thousand gaunt and half-naked wretches, by whose aid he was expected to defend the kingdom against the well-fed and warmly-clothed legions of Eugene and Marlborough. But despair was a feeling which never entered the breast of the Frenchman. His first measure was to arouse the high-toned nature of his countrymen. From the dawn of day till night he was to be seen parading about the camp, listening to the piteous tales of his men, sympathising with their sufferings, endeavouring to revive their hopes, and addressing to them stimulating discourses about glory. Yet every day, as he himself narrates, brought with it the dread of seeing the whole army perish. His supplies of grain never came in till the last moment, and then only in insufficient quantity. It was absolutely necessary to grind overnight the corn that was to be eaten next morning, and to grind in the morning the corn that was to furnish bread for supper. A slight change in the weather might prove fatal to the entire multitude. A few dry weeks would bring the mills to a standstill; a succession of rainy weeks would overwhelm them with water. At times when there was not sufficient food to furnish a meal for the whole army, it was the Marshal's custom to serve out rations only to those regiments which were to march, and to divert the remainder with an exposition of the virtue of patience. The soldiers thoroughly understood him, and bore their sufferings with quiet resignation. Their commander might have no bread for them, but their confidence that he would somehow support them and bring them through the campaign with honour, was unshaken. Villars was often touched by instances of their patient endurance. From the garrison of St. Venant came a humble request for food: "coats and shirts," added the poor fellows in that awful winter of 1709, "we must try and dispense with." One advantage the Marshal reaped from the very destitution that prevailed throughout the country. Sheer want drove into his camp a host of recruits who preferred to take their chance of starving in the army rather than encounter the certainty of starving at home. His force under these circumstances rapidly

augmented nearly to an equality with that of the Allies. "It is a marvel," he wrote, "how we subsist; and a still greater marvel is the patience with which our soldiers support the feeling of hunger.*

At the commencement of June, Villars assembled his troops in the spacious plains near Sens, and when the Allies began to move towards him fortified his position. He judged that Marlborough and Eugene would at once march against him, and his surmise proved correct. The two commanders, at the head of a hundred and ten thousand men, approached, and found the French army prepared for them behind a double line of ditches and entrenchments. After a deliberate survey of the position, they came to the conclusion that an attack upon it would be attended with great danger. During the night therefore they decamped in silence, and before Villars had become aware of their departure the news was brought him that they had formed the siege of Tournay.

Tournay, as a bulwark of France, was but little inferior in importance to Lille. Yet it was with a sense of relief that Louis and his Court heard that the irresistible army of which they had stood in so much terror had contentedly sat down to besiege a place which, but a few weeks since, had been offered to their plenipotentiaries without fighting. Villars himself, although the movements of the Allies had been too quick to allow of his throwing a much-needed reinforcement into the city, was on the whole well pleased to be let alone. Much as he vaunted the spirit and valour of his troops, he had as yet little real desire of seeing them encounter the Allies, and it was with perfect complacency, therefore, that he learnt that the Allies had chosen to undertake an operation which he thought might not improbably detain them until very nearly the close of the season. To give any assistance to the besieged was out of his power. He was, in truth, so straitened for provisions as to be unable to supply his men with sufficient for a two days' march. He remained, therefore, quietly on the watch, doing what he could to harass the communications of the Allies.

The siege was pressed on by the Allied commanders with their usual vigour; but the month of July had expired before

* Mémoires de Villars.

Surville, who commanded the garrison, thought proper to surrender the town, and the most difficult part of the work was yet before the Allies. The garrison, although too weak to man the whole extent of the walls, was sufficiently numerous for the defence of the citadel; and this fortress in itself enjoyed a terrible reputation. It was provided with a system of mines more diabolically skilful and complete than that of any other fortress in the world. Every foot of ground beneath the glacis, counterscarp, and covered way was rendered treacherous by an infernal labyrinth whose ramifications extended to inconceivable distances, at such a depth beneath the surface as to be undiscoverable by the miners engaged on the part of the besiegers. An endeavour was made to prevent the bloodshed which must occur in the assault and defence of this piece of engineering skill. Upon the surrender of the town the usual compliments were exchanged between the commanders on both sides, and Surville dined with Marlborough and Eugene. An offer was then made to him that, if he would agree to surrender the citadel at the expiration of one month in case of his receiving no relief, in the meanwhile the Allies would suspend their operations. Surville, who knew that he was short of provisions, approved of this proposal, and despatched a messenger to Versailles to obtain the sanction of the King. The messenger, however, speedily returned with the distinct refusal of his Majesty to assent to such terms. It seems that the construction put by Louis and his counsellors upon the proposal was that it was nothing more than a device upon the part of the Allied commanders to save their powder and men.*

In the struggle which ensued, and which lasted throughout another month, the spectacle of war was exhibited under its most frightful aspect. The citadel was gallantly defended. Scarcely a day passed but a whole company of soldiers, in the flush and excitement of a successful assault, was blown into the air. The miners on both sides, descending into the earth, worked towards each other till their mines not unfrequently met, and a bloody combat ensued underground. The ap-

* Campagne de Flandre; Marlborough to the Duchess, August 5—16. As a counterpart to the reflections of the French, Coxe observes, "This proposition was doubtless made with a view to gain time and amuse the Allies."

proaches were necessarily made by the slow process of sapping. But the number of sappers was insufficient for the work, and the character of the service was so perilous and revolting that it was difficult to obtain volunteers, even by holding out the temptation of large rewards. At length, however, Surville, finding himself at the end of his provisions, consented to capitulate. Terms were refused him. The whole garrison, four thousand five hundred men strong, was compelled to surrender at discretion.*

Although Louis had been led to imagine that the citadel would have held out much longer, he was satisfied with the explanations given by Surville. But so brief a defence disturbed all the calculations of Villars, and he vented his anger against the unlucky officer in such round terms as to draw down upon himself something like a reproof from his firm friend Madame de Maintenon. What the Allied commanders would attempt next he was now very anxious to learn. He had posted himself so as to be able to hasten to the succour of Douai, Valenciennes, Condé, or Mons, whichever city might be threatened. He was at this time, with the principal part of his troops, close to the first-named place. He had also constructed a series of lines extending from Mons to the Sambre to serve as a protection to the north-eastern frontier of France.

These lines, however, he had left but weakly guarded, and it was, therefore, with no small dismay that he received information three days after the surrender of the citadel that the whole army of the Allies was marching in the direction of Mons. He at once sent off instructions to some detached bodies in the vicinity of that city, and soon afterwards followed his messengers with his entire force. But the movements of the Allies had been too quick for him. Marlborough and Eugene had formed their plans for the siege of Mons some time before the white flag had been shown at Tournay. Three days prior to that event Lord Orkney had been sent forward with a small party: upon the same day that the citadel was given up, the Prince of Hesse followed on his track with a large body of cavalry; and by nightfal Cadogan and several more squadrons

* See the frightful details of this siege in the Lettres Historiques. The garrison was permitted to march out with the honours of war.

were also on the way. In spite of roads which had been deluged by the heavy rains, the Prince's cavalry made such good progress, that in two days the distance of fifty miles between Tournay and Mons had been compassed. There was only a slender force of the enemy in the neighbourhood, and this at the approach of the Allied cavalry was at once withdrawn. The siege of Mons was, therefore, secured, and as it was known that the city was but poorly garrisoned, its speedy downfall was regarded as certain, except in the case that Villars might risk a general engagement to effect its relief.

In the meantime the French army had not shown anything like a similar spirit to that which had kept the Allied soldiers trudging unwearily through the mud and rain. Like all the preceding French commanders, Villars had been late in obtaining information as to the designs of his opponents. He had, however, broken up on the instant he received it, and having a shorter distance to traverse, might perhaps, with a little forced marching, have been in time to anticipate the Prince of Hesse. He himself with his cavalry got to within a dozen miles of Mons; but the infantry was then a whole day's march in the rear, and without their support Villars dared not proceed. During two entire days, while Marlborough and Eugene were completing their preparations for the siege, the French remained inactive. Their commander was, in fact, taxing his ingenuity to procure such a supply of bread as might enable him to march and fight that battle which, by his own account, he was now fully determined to venture for the preservation of Mons. One event had excited great enthusiasm in the ranks. Upon the evening of the 7th of September a carriage had entered the camp, and from it the veteran Boufflers had been drawn by his servants, so crippled with gout as to be scarcely able to stand. For some years past the Marshal's infirmities had been such that Louis had systematically passed him over in making his arrangements. But the high-spirited old man could not in this crisis of his country's fortunes rest quietly in a sick chamber. In the previous year he had volunteered to defend Lille, and had extorted the admiration of the besiegers by his gallant and protracted defence. He had now requested of Louis permission to act as an assistant to Villars. The condition of affairs, he

urged, was such that the destiny of France hung upon the issue of a single battle. Should Villars fall in the midst of a general engagement the command could hardly devolve upon one of his lieutenant-generals without confusion, and perhaps contention, occurring at a critical time. But there could be no dispute if another marshal were present and ready to assume the authority in case of an accident. Until such an accident should occur, Boufflers professed himself perfectly willing to undertake any duty which his brother thought proper to entrust to him. Louis, although little touched, it should seem, by this proof of the Marshal's devotion, granted the required permission. The welcome of the soldiers made, however, some amends for the coldness of the monarch. The acclamations which greeted the arrival of the old favourite were so loud that the officers in the outposts of the Allied army imagined that a resolution to give battle had been announced, and sent in warning to head-quarters. Towards Villars the behaviour of Boufflers were studiedly modest and deferential; and Villars in consequence was all amiability. A friendly contest arose between the two Marshals on the following day as to which should give the word. It was settled by their both accepting it from an inferior officer. Upon subsequent days the word was given by Villars without reference to his visitor. Another personage still more interesting to the English reader arrived at the French camp about the same time. It was the Chevalier de St. George, who was bent on serving as a volunteer, and who, upon receiving information that a battle was imminent, had risen from a sick bed with the remains of a fever still hanging about him.*

And now Villars, having at last succeeded in procuring for his troops a supply of provisions somewhat in advance of the day's consumption, thought he might venture to advance. Between his position and that of the Allied army was a broad belt of woods. About five miles, however, to the south of Mons there was an opening in the belt, and through this opening, which was upwards of a mile in breadth, he determined to lead his troops to within view of the enemy. On the morning of the 9th of September the Allies caught sight of the advancing

* Mémoires de Villars; St. Simon; Campagne de Flandre.

French columns, and Marlborough and Eugene, under the impression that an attack was intended, hastily made their preparations for battle. At the hamlet of Malplaquet, however, the French came to a halt, and the rest of the day was spent by the two armies in cannonading each other at long distances. The design of Villars quickly revealed itself. No sooner had his men ceased to march than the spade was in the ground and innumerable axes at work among the trees. His object was evidently to entrench his army in a position from which he might watch all that passed in the Allied camp, and throw every impediment in the way of the siege.

A council of war was held by the Allied commanders. The expediency, and indeed the necessity, of dislodging Villars from the position he had now taken up was apparent to every one. Marlborough recommended that the attack should be made at once, before the French should have time to strengthen themselves by artificial means. But the majority of the council was opposed to this course. There were yet twenty battalions of infantry which had not arrived from Tournay. The Dutch deputies were, as usual, averse to what they considered precipitate measures. Eugene himself counselled delay. It was resolved therefore to postpone the attack until the army had regained its full complement.

Upon the following day, when the commanders rode forth to reconnoitre the position of the enemy, the spectacle which met their eyes was far from encouraging. During the night the French had laboured incessantly, and their fortifications were fast assuming an appearance of being utterly impregnable. Villars had arranged his army in the form of a crescent, the centre stretching across the open ground, and the wings skirting the woods on either side. The front, along its entire extent, was protected by a series of trenches and breastworks which were in some places doubled and even trebled, with felled trees lying before them. The ground over which an attacking force would have to pass, was intersected by streamlets and hedges that threatened to be fatal to an advance in good order, especially of cavalry. Batteries of cannon, moreover, were posted at such points as to command every part of the field by which an enemy could approach.

Such was the position of the French army. Upon the infantry the duty of defending the entrenchments fell of course in the first place. But behind the infantry was drawn up in endless lines the cavalry containing all the renowned regiments of France. According to French accounts the entire force consisted of a hundred and twenty battalions, two hundred and sixty squadrons, and of eighty pieces of artillery, which together may have represented a total of a hundred thousand men. After the event of the battle Villars asserted that the Allied army outnumbered his own by some thirty thousand soldiers; but for this assertion there is no foundation. The strength of Marlborough and Eugene, which had been at the outset of the campaign a hundred and ten thousand men, had been reduced, by the detachments it had been necessary to make for the blockade of Mons, to little more than ninety thousand. Of the spirit which pervaded all ranks the Marshal spoke in the highest terms of praise, and confidently assured his Majesty that, if the Allies thought proper to attack him, he would give them a good beating.*

The 10th of September was a day of awful calm. Each side was busy with its preparations. The French worked steadily at their defences. The Allied commanders issued their orders for the attack which was to be made on the morrow. The outposts of the two armies were so close to each other that rough civilities passed between the sentinels. Some of the Allied officers strolled with apparent carelessness right up to the entrenchments, and entered into conversation with the defenders. Villars peremptorily stopped these proceedings as soon as his attention was called to them. He suspected that the visitors were engineers, whose design was rather to make acquaintance with his works than to exchange idle compliments with his officers.

By midnight the battalions from Tournay had reached the Allied camp, and not a moment more was lost. With the first dawn of the autumnal morning the troops turned out, heard prayers read at the head of their regiments, and then marched off to the stations assigned them. The usual mist at sunrise concealed for some hours their movements from the enemy,

* Villars to the King, September 10.

and enabled them to plant unmolested their batteries at convenient points. But towards eight the fog cleared away. Their advance was at once perceived, and the alarm spread in an instant through the hostile camp. The French left off working at their entrenchments, and stood to their arms. A furious cannonade began. Villars, perceiving from the disposition of the Allied troops that the main effort would be made against his left wing, chose his station in this part of the field, and despatched Boufflers to take command of the right. The two marshals had hardly reached their posts when the battle commenced in earnest. Two dense columns of Imperial infantry containing not less than twenty-five thousand men, advanced under the leadership of Counts Lottum and Schulenberg through a raking fire from the batteries against the works which the French had constructed upon the skirts of the wood of Taisnières. As they approached the entrenchments the defenders, who had hitherto remained quiet, delivered a volley of musketry that caused many regiments to recoil in confusion. Both Marlborough and Eugene hastened to the spot. Eugene showed himself at the head of Schulenberg's division. Marlborough charged with the troops of Lottum against the entrenchments upon the left of the French centre. Villars was at this very point animating his men, and could plainly distinguish both his principal antagonists, who were at no great distance from himself. The French stood their ground firmly, and after an exciting struggle the Marshal was able to congratulate himself upon having foiled an attack headed in person by the two most renowned soldiers of Europe.

But by this time the Allied troops were penetrating from all sides up that gulf of fire which led to the French entrenchments. Upon the left had been stationed with the greater part of the Dutch infantry a young prince of the House of Nassau, who had succeeded to the title of Prince of Orange upon the death of his relative, William III. His instructions appear to have been none other than to wait quietly at his post until further orders. There can be indeed little doubt that the intentions of Marlborough and Eugene were to keep most of the troops composing the left wing in reserve, and to make drafts upon them, as occasion required, for the purpose of

sustaining the attack of the right. The Prince, however, having waited for half an hour, grew impatient at hearing nothing from his commanders. He imagined that he was forgotten, and was indignant at the thought that other officers should be gathering laurels while he was standing idle. He determined to push forward; the word was given, and in a few minutes Dutch, English, Highland, Hanoverian, and Prussian regiments were, at the instigation of this hot-headed youth, rushing heedlessly forward against works of the strength of which they had not the slightest conception. As the battalions struggled through the marshy ground they were mercilessly cut up by grape. The aides-de-camp and servants of the Prince fell fast by his side. His own horse was shot beneath him; but he rushed forward on foot, and at the head of the Dutch and Highland brigades succeeded in entering the first line of the entrenchments. In another moment Boufflers and his cavalry were upon the invaders, swept them back, as by a whirlwind, across the trenches, and the Marshal, not content with this success, issued through the opening of the lines, and chased the rash assailants back nearly to the place from whence they started. Nothing daunted by his discomfiture, the Prince snatched a pair of colours from one of his officers, rallied his broken battalions, and led them a second time to the entrenchments. Again they were hurled back by the fiery cavalry of France. The carnage among the Dutch troops was horrible, and the more horrible from the circumstance that all this blood was shed to no purpose. Three lieutenant-generals, Spaar, Oxenstiern, and Week, the Marquis of Tullibardine, heir to the dignities of Athol, were among the slain. The whole left wing narrowly escaped being annihilated, and seems to have owed its preservation partly to the steadiness of the horse under the command of the Prince of Hesse, and partly to the orders which had been laid on the French cavalry not to venture outside the lines.

Marlborough and Eugene, ill as they could afford to absent themselves from the right, galloped to that part of the field where they perceived that everything was in disorder. They reached the spot, however, only in time to be witnesses of the results of entrusting a gallant but inexperienced boy with

high command. They were soon recalled to the right by the news of fresh disasters which had occurred in that quarter. Schulenberg's and Lottum's divisions had been recently making such progress that Villars had been reluctantly compelled to summon to his support several squadrons and battalions from the centre. The vigorous charges made by the new comers, among whom, conspicuous for its impetuosity, was the Irish brigade, had again restored the battle in favour of the French. Eugene, in rallying his men, was wounded in the head by a musket-ball, but not so badly as to force him to retire. Villars was more unfortunate. A shot struck him close to the knee. He called for a chair and a surgeon, and for a short time continued to issue his orders. Then he fainted, and was carried off the field in a state of insensibility to Quesnoy.

The battle had now been raging for four hours. Both wings of the French had been attacked, but the Allies had as yet gained but slight advantages at the expense of oceans of blood. They now executed a movement which proved decisive. A great part of the troops in the enemy's centre had been withdrawn for the support of the hardly-pressed left wing. The Allied commanders saw their opportunity, and made arrangements for an attack upon that portion of the entrenchments which had been almost denuded of defenders. The foot of Lord Orkney led the way. His regiment marched against the centre and entered the lines almost without opposition. It was followed closely by the horse of the Prince of Auvergne. These quickly faced to the left to encounter an enormous mass of cavalry which came swooping down upon them. Boufflers having perceived from his post on the right what had occurred, had instantly collected every available squadron. Among the cavaliers who headed the *maison du roi* was seen the titular King of England, who on this day evinced a spirit which deserted him some years later when oppressed with the responsibility of command. A terrific struggle ensued. By successive reinforcements to both sides almost all the cavalry on the field became engaged at the same time, and for the best part of an hour the tide of combatants surged backwards and forwards. The French had at first the advantage, and the horse of the Prince of Auvergne would perhaps have been

annihilated but for the infantry who, mounted on the breastworks, delivered their fire with that coolness and precision which have always characterised troops of Teutonic origin. At length Boufflers became convinced of the expediency of drawing off. He saw that the army was cut in two, the two wings being almost incapable of communicating with each other, and word was brought him that the officers on the left were retiring. The gallant veteran issued general orders for a retreat in the direction of Valenciennes, and with so much steadiness was the march commenced that the Allies soon relinquished all pursuit. The victorious army remained on the field in possession of the rewards of their valour—the vacant entrenchments, five hundred prisoners, a few pieces of cannon, and a few stands of colours, trophies which had been purchased by the death or mutilation of nearly twenty thousand of their number.*

The losses of the French did not probably exceed twelve thousand men. They had fought during the whole time from under cover, except when their cavalry made those vigorous sorties which bore down everything before them. The two Marshals vied in consoling their master for his misfortune by extolling the bravery which had been exhibited by his soldiers. Louis was on the whole contented with the result of the battle. The effect of years of heavy misfortunes had been to indispose him to indulge in sanguine anticipations, and, compared with such disasters as had befallen him at Blenheim and Ramilies, the defeat at Malplaquet might be almost esteemed a victory. His appreciation of Villars was shown by his despatching to him his own surgeon, together with the patent of a peerage. The courtiers were soon sick with envy at the caresses which the great monarch condescended to heap upon the Marshal. As soon as Villars could be removed he was carried to Versailles, lodged in a chamber contiguous to that of his Majesty, was visited by the King, who strove by many kind expressions to cure the wounded vanity of a commander beaten for the first

* In the Pièces Relatives à la Campagne de Flandre are two relations of the battle of Malplaquet, one published by the Court of France and the other by the Allies. The letters from Boufflers and Villars to the King. Other authorities are the Mémoires de Villars; St. Simon; the Criticisms of Feuquières; Marlborough's letters to Boyle and Stanhope in the Despatches; several letters from different persons in the Lettres Historiques and Lamberty. Coxe furnishes, as usual, the most abundant details.

time in his life, and had the satisfaction of beholding around his bed of convalescence a daily throng of princes, ministers, and great ladies.

The Allied commanders were now able to pursue the siege of Mons without much danger of being molested. Boufflers had retired to Quesnoy, and taken up a safe position behind the river Ronelle, from which he either did not think it expedient or he was really in no condition to emerge. His army was, in truth, on the verge of starvation. Even the superior officers could not always procure meat, and, in the midst of their splendid equipages, were often compelled to submit to the pangs of hunger. The common soldiers could get neither bread nor pay, and supported life chiefly upon herbs and roots. That Boufflers should under such circumstances have despaired of hindering the fall of Mons is not therefore strange. Yet Louis did not suffer the Allies to have their own way without thoroughly satisfying himself of the hopelessness of attempting to impede them. Berwick was summoned from Dauphiny, and it was not until his report upon the situation of affairs had been made that the King reluctantly decided to leave the garrison to its fate. Mons in itself was indifferently fortified, and its defenders scarcely numbered more than three thousand five hundred men. But the surroundings of the city were flat and marshy, and it rained perpetually. The besiegers worked on in misery for upwards of three weeks, often up to their knees in water, and constantly harassed by the garrison, who watched their opportunities for making sorties, and not unfrequently made them with great effect. At the end of that time terms of capitulation were arranged, and this small city, purchased by so much blood, submitted to the government of the Allies.

With this achievement the Allied commanders were forced to bring their labours to a close. That splendid army of a hundred and ten thousand men, with which they had commenced operations, was now reduced to about three-fourths of the number, and the survivors, exhausted by the hardships incidental to two sieges, and many of them enfeebled by half-healed wounds and maladies caused by exposure to the weather, were greatly in need of repose. Towards the end of October, therefore, the various regiments were distributed in the usual

manner among the conquered cities of the Netherlands, and the example set by the Allies was gladly followed by their almost equally wearied adversaries.

In every other quarter, except in the Netherlands, where the losses of Tournay and Mons were calamities far less serious than Louis had anticipated at the outset of the campaign, the results of the year had not been unfavourable to France. The French armies had indeed been left to find subsistence in any manner they could. Berwick's army, among the rest, had been in such imminent danger of perishing by famine that the Marshal had at length ventured in his despair to intercept the King's money as it was being conveyed to Court from the southern provinces.* But the Allies, always dilatory and irresolute when neither Eugene nor Marlborough was present to infuse spirit into their counsels, failed to take advantage of the distresses of the enemy. The Elector of Hanover, after brooding over his grievances until the season was far advanced, condescended at last to go for two or three months to the army of the Rhine. His force was not numerous, and George, although personally courageous, was certainly not endowed with that genius which supplies the deficiency of battalions. The only enterprise of moment which was undertaken during his stay failed in the most signal manner. One of the Elector's principal officers, the Count de Merci, the grandson of a commander who had been no unworthy antagonist of Condé and Turenne, was selected to lead a detachment by a long circuitous route across the Rhine for the purpose of surprising the towns of Franche Comté. Harcourt, the French general in that quarter, however, having received intelligence of the design, sent off a large force to frustrate it. The Count, suspecting nothing, hastened blindly forward to his destruction. A battle ensued, his detachment was cut in pieces, and he himself was indebted for his personal safety solely to the speed of his horse.†

From the martial spirit of the Duke of Savoy much had been expected, and the maritime Powers had spared neither flattery nor even money to excite his ambition. But the Duke, like

* Mémoires de Berwick.
† Campagne d'Allemagne; Lettres Historiques.

the Elector, had his discontents. He had been long since promised by the Emperor Leopold the investiture of certain principalities in Italy. This promise Joseph, upon some trivial pretext, refused to fulfil; and the consequence was that Victor Amadeus, instead of passing the mountains and descending upon Dauphiny with a great army, remained throughout the whole season sulking in his palace at Turin.

In Spain events had occurred which boded ill for the Allied cause. The apathetic Spaniards were at length beginning to rouse themselves and to take an interest in the war. Rumours of what was passing at the Hague had reached the Peninsula. It was commonly reported that Louis intended to abandon his grandson, and people became convinced of the truth of the report when most of the French regiments were withdrawn from the country. It is not uncharacteristic of the Spanish nation that the departure of their friends roused in them a patriotic spirit which the spectacle of British, Dutch, Austrian, and Portuguese invaders had failed to excite. So long as other persons were willing to fight their battles, they were content to look on in idleness; but as soon as it became evident that, if the heretics and plunderers were ever to be turned out of the country, the work must be done by themselves, they braced their nerves to action. The first ebullition of their feelings was directed against the French, whom they had always regarded with that bitter jealousy which men, poor, ignorant, and vain, constantly bear towards those whom they cannot but see are their superiors in intelligence, energy, wealth, in everything in short except that particular form of superstition which is termed orthodoxy. The facts that the King of France had, by supporting their sovereign, brought his own affairs to the verge of ruin, that thousands upon thousands of Frenchmen had fallen in fighting the battles of king Philip, were all forgotten in a moment. By the public voice Louis was execrated as a dastardly betrayer of his own flesh and blood; and so vehement was the hatred of him, that his subjects in this ungrateful country went for some time in fear of their lives. Gradually, however, the enthusiasm of the people turned itself in a better direction. The Spaniards began to understand that, if they wished to retain Philip for their sovereign and to escape

the degradation of having a sovereign imposed upon them by foreigners, they must furnish something more towards his support than their bare sympathies. Philip, who had every reason to apprehend that his grandfather would soon be no longer in a position to assist him, was not sorry to see his subjects in this frame of mind, and endeavoured to turn the opportunity to advantage. As an earnest of his intention never to abandon his kingdom, he had his son formally consecrated as Prince of the Asturias. The eagerness with which the grandees of Spain thronged to offer their homage to the infant, made it plain what were the inclinations, at least of the upper classes, as regarded the House of Bourbon; and their good will was still further conciliated when Philip remodelled his Council, dismissed the greater part of his French advisers, and professed that he would in future rely on the guidance of Spanish statesmen. A little of the hoarded wealth of these magnates began now to dribble into the royal exchequer. The lower orders gave equal proofs of affection to their sovereign by volunteering in greater numbers than heretofore to serve in his armies.*

The public enthusiasm received an impetus during the spring by the news of a victory gained on the frontier of Portugal by the Marquis de Bay over an united army of Portuguese and British. The circumstances which led to the incident were these. In the commencement of the season, Galway had found himself, in conjunction with the Marquis de Fronteira, commander of a small army in which the native English did not much exceed one thousand foot. He was inclined, for good reasons, to act with much caution. His opponent, De Bay, he knew, was a general not to be despised. The Spanish horse, moreover, outnumbered the horse under Fronteira, and Galway had obtained some insight into the character of Portuguese cavalry at the battle of Almanza. The two armies, however, came into presence upon opposite sides of the Caya. The blood of the Portuguese officers caught fire at the taunts and insults of the Spaniards, and, in an evil hour, Galway allowed himself to be talked over into crossing the river. Before the army had time to complete its formation on the other bank,

* Lettres Historiques.

De Bay charged with his cavalry. The Portuguese horse on the two wings, according to their customary tactics, took to flight. A retreat was commenced by the infantry. The English regiments acted as a rear-guard, but soon got separated from their allies and were surrounded and compelled to surrender. Galway himself succeeded with great difficulty in making his escape.*

Upon the other side of the Peninsula affairs had remained almost at a standstill. Charles and his generals felt themselves too weak to aspire to much beyond retaining their ground, and Philip's army was paralyzed, not only by the usual deficiency of money and provisions, but by dissensions among the officers, which the presence of Philip himself was unable to assuage. The Spaniards turned fiercely upon the French, whom they insulted as the betrayers of their country; and the French, in their indignation at the ingratitude of people whom they had been hitherto supporting at the expense of their lives, would perhaps have remained with their arms folded if Charles had seized the opportunity of making an attack. Staremberg was actually suffered to invest the fortress of Balaguer, to carry on a siege almost under the eyes of the hostile army, and finally to take possession of the place under a capitulation before the jealousies between the French and Spaniards had been so far composed as to permit of their marching against him. On the other hand, however, the Duke de Noailles, who had a French army near the Pyrenees, made an irruption into Catalonia, reduced Figueras, and cut in pieces an Austrian detachment which he surprised near Gerona.

The attention of Charles and his Court was, in truth, directed with much more anxiety to the negociations proceeding at the Hague than to what was passing immediately around them. At the commencement of the year there seemed a strong probability that the war would be brought to an end by the plenipotentiaries, that Louis would retire from the contest, and leave his grandson with no other resource than to surrender his throne. Under circumstances so auspicious to Charles, it might be supposed that the thoughts of that prince were replete with joy and gratitude. It is not a little singular and instruc-

* Lettres Historiques; Boyer; St. Simon.

tive to find him nourishing against the English and Dutch, who were labouring to procure him a crown, a resentment as bitter as that of his rival Philip, whom the same parties were striving with all their might to depose. The cause of his indignation was the evident determination of the Dutch to retain in military occupation most of the towns in the Spanish Netherlands. Without the aid of the Dutch the cause of Charles would obviously have been almost hopeless. Their strenuous efforts had been a principal means of bringing a great empire almost within his grasp; yet, inasmuch as they were too prudent to leave their reward to his princely generosity, but chose to reserve to their own use certain towns for their security against the ambition of France, they had assumed in the eyes of Charles and his counsellors an appearance no more respectable than that of a gang of bandits. It was plain that this creature, the mere breath of the Allied powers, was already in his own imagination King of Spain, and had all the feelings of a Spanish monarch. To curtail his dominions was to do him an injustice. The German language scarcely contained terms strong enough for him to express his sense of the robbery that was in contemplation. His sole hope of escaping from the rapacity of the Dutch lay in Marlborough. It had always been a favourite scheme of Charles to bind this all-important personage to his interests by making him Governor-General of the Netherlands; and Marlborough would have been only too delighted to accept a post which would compensate him for what he must lose by the termination of the war, which would add sixty thousand pounds a year to his revenues, and would exalt him to a position of greater splendour and power than that enjoyed by many European sovereigns. But the hero, although again and again pressed to signify his acceptance, as often forced himself to decline. He understood too well the feelings of the Dutch in regard to their barrier to place himself in a position which would infallibly have brought him into antagonism with them. The hope of acquiring the coveted towns was all that kept the Dutch true to the alliance. If it became plain that they were not to have them, they would certainly secede. The coalition would be broken up. The fruits of years of successful warfare would be irremediably lost;

and Charles himself would find that, in stickling for the integrity of his dominions, he had lost his chances of getting any part of them.

In fact the English Government, so far from taking the part of Charles, had by this time come to a secret arrangement with the Dutch in complete opposition to what that prince considered his interests. The attitude maintained by the Republic had been, throughout the war, such as to cause continual apprehension to that party in England which enthusiastically supported the war, and considered that the prosperity and security of the kingdom depended upon prosecuting that war to a triumphant conclusion. Without the support of the Dutch all experience tended to show that the other members of the Confederacy would find themselves too weak to cope with France, at least in the Netherlands. Louis had been constantly endeavouring to seduce the Republic with tempting offers of a settlement of the barrier question, and the fear was ever present to the minds of English politicians that the temptation would at length prove irresistible. Under such circumstances it seemed that there was but one path for the Government of England to pursue. It was to convince the Dutch that they could get more by fidelity to the Alliance, and by a hearty prosecution of the common cause, than by bargaining with an artful and perfidious sovereign like Louis. Townshend was at great pains, as soon as Marlborough had retired to the army, to teach this lesson, and it soon appeared that his pupils were sufficiently apt and intelligent. They understood but too well their importance in the Confederacy, and were fully disposed to profit by their importance to the uttermost limit. Louis, it seems, had but offered them a single chain of fortresses. Such a security might have been accepted with gratitude at the outset of the war when Louis was great and powerful, and the little Republic in daily terror of seeing itself crushed under the tread of his legions of soldiers. But it was far below what the conquerors in this arduous struggle thought that they had a right to demand. The project of a treaty between Holland and England was delivered by the Dutch statesman to Townshend, who duly transmitted it to his Government. It stipulated that the States-general should be placed in military possession not only

of the most important towns in the Spanish Netherlands, but of every town conquered or which should be conquered from France during the war, with a further requirement that the Spanish Government should pay to the States four hundred thousand crowns a year to meet the expense of the garrisons. The States-general were also to be at liberty, at any time when they judged that an attack upon them was in contemplation by France, to put garrisons into any town of the Spanish Netherlands. In the quiet possession of these towns they were to be guaranteed by England, who was to bind herself, in case of any attack being made upon the States, to hasten to their succour with her whole force. It is true that the little Republic had something to offer by way of compensation for the services she expected from England. She undertook to guarantee the Protestant succession of our sovereigns, an undertaking which imported that Britons should never become the slaves to any Popish prince if the Republic could prevent it. Marlborough himself, anxious as he was to preserve a good understanding with the States, was disconcerted and disgusted by pretensions so audacious, and foresaw clearly the storm of indignation which would arise in England when the provisions of the treaty became publicly known.* He suggested that a clause should at least be inserted to bind the States not to make peace with France unless the entire cession of the Spanish dominions and the demolition of Dunkirk were among the conditions; but Heinsius and those other deputies who had the conduct of the negotiations would not consent to this. They were determined to keep themselves free to watch all the turns of the war and to act as occasion prompted. All the obligations were to be on the side of England: the States were to be at perfect liberty to pursue their own interests.

Such was the treaty between the Queen and the States which Townshend transmitted to the Government at home. The Whig leaders, to whom the dread of offending the Dutch was paramount to every consideration, strongly urged its acceptance. Townshend himself was impatient to receive the necessary powers for concluding the business. Godolphin, in possession of the opinions of Marlborough, scarcely knew how to act. But

* Marlborough to Godolphin, August 19—30.

the Whigs insisted, and there was no resource but to give way. The Queen's pleasure was signified, and Townshend joyfully signed his name to the treaty, a transaction for which he was destined in no long time to be stigmatised by the Parliament as the enemy of her Majesty and the kingdom. The politic and far-seeing Marlborough excused himself from having anything to do with the matter.

Throughout the summer negotiations had been going on between Louis and the Dutch Government. The resumption of the war, the clash of contending armies, the siege of towns, had not extinguished the hopes of those who were anxious for peace. The circumstances of the case were such as might well stimulate to exertion men actuated by very different motives. To a benevolent heart it might seem that three great nations were pining to be at rest, but were kept slaughtering each other by the ambition, the obstinacy, or it might be for the mere private interests, of a few leading statesmen in England and Holland. The blessings of millions would assuredly be showered on the head of that individual who should be the means of bringing the plenipotentiaries together again. A mind of less exalted nature might be allured by the reward which Louis was willing to pay to any one who could further his wishes for peace, and such a mind had Petcum, a diplomatist in the service of the Duke of Holstein. He had been concerned in the first obscure negotiations which ended in despatching Rouillé into Holland, and during the conferences had been found useful as a kind of go-between. As soon as the Ministers separated he had applied himself with much spirit to the task of bringing them again into relations with each other. He wrote encouragingly to Torcy upon the state of public feeling in Holland, and his letter was shown to Louis. That monarch, at the close of the campaign of 1709, was, if possible, still more anxious for peace than at its commencement. His distresses were overwhelming. He saw his armies literally starving, his people stricken with famine, his treasury bankrupt, his financial prospects utterly desperate, the very soil seeming to cry aloud for peace and withholding its increase. Humiliating as were the conditions offered him, he seems to have by degrees wrought himself into thinking that it would be best in his unfortunate circumstances to accept

them, if only the Allies would consent to some modification of those articles which required him, in case Philip should refuse to abdicate the Spanish crown, to join in the war against him. He now professed himself willing to adopt a suggestion, which had been made during the conferences but indignantly rejected by Torcy, that he should, as a guarantee of Philip's surrendering the crown, deliver a pledge into the hands of the Allies. He was ready, he declared, to place any three towns on his northern frontier in their possession to be retained by them until Philip's abdication was complete. The proposal was communicated to Heinsius, and the Pensionary's answer, although not amounting to an acceptance of it, was written with great mildness, and at least expressed a wish to reopen the negotiations. But any hopes that the gentleness of the reply may have raised in Louis were soon dispelled. It became evident, as the correspondence proceeded, that influence had been brought to bear upon Heinsius. The King was informed that his proposal had been considered and found insufficient. Was it likely that Philip would yield up his crown merely that his grandfather might redeem a pledge of three towns? It would be moreover, an excellent bargain for the King of France if he could retain the Spanish dominions in his family at this price. If his Majesty wished to be thought sincere, he would add to his proposal some of the principal fortresses of Spain. Louis would hear no more. He was in utter despair. Again the conviction forced itself upon his mind that he was being hunted to death by a pitiless faction whom no arguments or reasonable offers would turn aside. Was it not monstrous to ask him to surrender fortresses which did not belong to him? How was he to obtain them from his grandson? Was he to tear them from him by force, or was he expected to get possession of them by an act of unnatural treachery? *

The King's proposal was not, however, rejected without producing one important result. It widened the breach that, notwithstanding the eagerness of the Whigs to gratify the ambition of the Dutch, had begun to exist between the two Governments. Heinsius was strongly of opinion that the King's proposal should not be lightly declined. If, he told

* Mémoires de Torcy.

Marlborough, the peace party in the States were to hear that such an offer had been made, and summarily rejected, there would be a terrible clamour. The Duke was so far swayed by his representations as to accept a compromise. He wished to avoid, if possible, the appearance of shutting the door rudely against Peace. It was agreed, therefore, that Petcum should have what he had long solicited from the Pensionary, permission to go to Versailles without other commission than to ascertain definitely what fresh terms Louis would be disposed to grant.

CHAPTER V.

A FEW days after Petcum's departure for Versailles, Marlborough returned to London, where he arrived in time for the reopening of Parliament. He had before leaving the Hague succeeded in making satisfactory arrangements for that next year's campaign, which was, as usual, the last which could possibly be needed to extinguish the small remains of pride and obstinacy in the French king. The terrible slaughter which had been made of the Dutch infantry at Malplaquet had cast a gloom over the whole Republic, and had no doubt increased that feeling of impatience with which a large party regarded the war. Yet the deputies of the States still showed in their dealings with Marlborough and Eugene no symptoms of cooling in their prosecution of the contest. They acquiesced readily in the representations of the two generals that more magazines and provision-waggons would be required for the army as it advanced into France, consented to bear their stipulated proportion of the cost, and only exacted from Eugene in return a promise that he would use his best influence to make the Imperial circles send their proper quota of forces.

It has been said that Marlborough, in taking leave of his friends in Holland, let fall some gloomy forebodings of the treatment he expected in England. Yet the very day he landed in his native country was marked by a new, and what might seem a crowning, victory achieved by the Whigs. Pembroke, whose opinions had been latterly inclining to the Tories, in consideration of a pension, resigned the Admiralty, which was put into the hands of a Whig commission with Orford at the head. It was remarkable that Anne, notwithstanding the dislike she bore to this ardent Revolutionist, the conqueror of her father's fleet at La Hogue, yielded to the

instances of Godolphin with far more facility in his case than when Cowper, Sunderland, and Somers were forced upon her. Some of the party were sanguine enough to imagine that her Majesty's opinions must be undergoing a change; and even Marlborough began to think that she was convinced of the impossibility of carrying on the Government except by Whig Ministers. The circumstance that she had been latterly a little more gracious towards Sunderland afforded some corroboration to this surmise;* but on other grounds the position of affairs was not reassuring. Anne's behaviour towards the Duchess had been exceedingly cool throughout the year. The Duke, in the midst of a trying campaign, had been perpetually harassed by letters from his wife urging him to write to Mrs. Morley and reason with her about her barbarous usage of Mrs. Freeman. He had replied with his usual good sense. A letter from him, he represented, could do no good. It would only be shown to Mrs. Masham, who would prepare Mrs. Morley with an answer when he spoke to her. He entreated his wife to be quiet, and abstain from recriminations. "It had always been his observation in disputes between friends that reproaches, however reasonable, did but make the breach wider."† But such counsels were lost upon Mrs. Freeman. She could not stand by and allow Tory suggestions to be smuggled into the royal chamber without speaking her mind with what she termed plainness and zeal, nor was she in the least daunted by the sulky looks and obstinate silence with which her lectures were received. A new quarrel, which probably occurred about this period, had been excited by nothing but her own ill-timed greediness. She had set her heart upon obtaining certain rooms which had been recently vacated in St. James's Palace. Anne wished to give them to a sister of Mrs. Masham, and the Duchess would not take a civil refusal. She claimed a promise of the rooms: Anne denied having made it, and Mrs. Free-

* Marlborough to the Duchess, November 1—12. He says, "I believe her (the Queen's) easiness to Lord Sunderland proceeds from her being told that she can't do other than go on with the Whigs; but be assured that Mrs. Masham and Mr. Harley will, underhand, do everything that can make the business uneasy, and particularly to you, the Lord Treasurer and to me: for they know very well that, if we were removed, everything would be in their power."

† Marlborough to the Duchess, August 26, September 6. In another letter, August 22, September 2, he advises his wife to "be obliging and kind to all her friends, and avoid entering into cabals."

man's temper broke out. "People will think it strange," she cried, "when they hear that after all Lord Marlborough's services you refuse to give him a miserable hole to make a clear entry to his lodgings." After expressing a hope that her Majesty would reflect upon what had passed, she flung out of the chamber, and took her departure into the country. But she could not rest under defeat. After a few days of solitary meditation upon her wrongs, upon the numberless letters of good sound Whiggish counsel which she had written to no purpose, upon the political lectures she had thrown away upon her stupid and ungrateful pupil, upon the smiles which "that creature" received and the black looks which welcomed herself, she rushed back again to Court, and desired to know what crime she had committed that her Majesty behaved to her in so altered a manner. The Queen's reply—a written one, for in the presence of the terrible Duchess Anne's speech failed her—set forth one phase of her mind in a light unpleasantly clear. "It is impossible for you," she said, "to recover my former kindness; but I shall behave towards you as the Duke of Marlborough's wife and my groom of the stole."*

The Marlboroughs were dismayed by this plain avowal; but they kept it a secret. It is unlikely that any of those Whig statesmen who were constantly forcing Godolphin to wrest from the Queen concessions for their party had any clear and positive knowledge of the Duchess's entire loss of favour. But the Duke could see plainly that with the close of the war would infallibly end all the power and influence he possessed. There was one great calamity which might befall both himself and the entire nation if he were to be deprived of command. The health of the Queen seemed to be breaking. A demise would happen at probably no distant date, and a few days would then decide whether the Hanoverians or the Stuarts should reign over Great Britain. The gravest consequences might be apprehended if, during those critical days, the whole military and naval strength of the kingdom should be in the hands of the Tories. There can at the present time be little doubt that the reproach of Jacobitism, which the Whigs were fond of casting at the whole body of their political adversaries,

* Conduct of the Duchess.

was unfounded—that it was really the wish of nine-tenths of the Tory party that the Act of Settlement should be carried into operation. But the Tories had been but half-hearted in the struggle of 1689; they had only submitted to the transference of the crown from the hereditary prince with a reluctant and sullen acquiescence. It could not be expected that such men would display as much vigour in upholding the work of the Revolution as the men who had been mainly instrumental in accomplishing the change. Nor was it likely that the party which nourished against Dissenters a hatred more bitter than that which it harboured against Papists, would espouse with any warmth the cause of a Lutheran sovereign. There was a strong probability therefore that if, at the time of the Queen's demise, the Tories were in power, even if no direct support were afforded to the Prince of Wales, there would be no effectual measures taken to keep him out of the country, or to promote the peaceable succession of the Princess Sophia. In the establishment of a Popish dynasty a devout Protestant such as Marlborough might well apprehend the ruin of the nation. For his own private interests the return of the Stuarts could not fail of being disastrous. He had committed against the father such offences as no son could be expected to forgive. He had indeed contrived to convey to the exiles from time to time hypocritical professions of his desire to serve them. But his acts had corresponded so ill with his professions that he could have retained no hope that he was a favourite at St. Germains.

It would seem that considerations of the danger in which both he and his country alike stood, suggested to him a bold expedient for securing the succession of Hanover.* He would profit by his present importance and by the remains of that affection which he conceived that the Queen still entertained for him to obtain the appointment of Captain-General for life. Whether there was any precedent for such an appointment, or whether indeed it was in the power of the sovereign to make such an appointment without the sanction of Parliament, were

* The attempt of Marlborough to procure the appointment of Captain-general for life has been always represented as a merely selfish design. But I do not think it fair to exclude altogether the possibility of his being influenced by patriotic motives.

matters respecting which he was in doubt; but he consulted a friend of ample learning, the Lord Chancellor Cowper. Cowper was not only surprised but displeased at the application, replied at once that there had never been an instance of a general appointed for life, and strongly urged the Duke to relinquish his scheme. At Marlborough's request he took the trouble of searching the records; but the result of his investigation served only to corroborate his opinion. The ancient dignity of Lord High Constable had indeed been held not only for life, but was even hereditary in families. The dignity had, however, reverted to the sovereign upon the attainder of Buckingham, and had never again been granted to any one. Marlborough then had recourse to James Craggs, a gentleman who had made himself agreeable to the Whigs, and who was at present content to execute petty diplomatic jobs for his party, but who rose in the subsequent reign to be a Secretary of State. It had occurred to the Duke that the commission of Lieutenant-general of the armies of the three kingdoms conferred by Charles II. in a season of exuberant gratitude upon Monk would be found to be for life. Upon examination, however, the commission proved to be in the usual form. It was conferred only during the King's pleasure.

It seemed clear, therefore, that there was no precedent of a life appointment to the command of the army. But Marlborough was not to be deterred from a scheme so conducive to his own security and that of the kingdom on this account. During the campaign he wrote to Anne, and requested her to gratify his wish. With what emotions his request was received only slight evidence remains to show; but it cannot have failed to cause her embarrassment. It does not appear that the matter was laid before the Privy Council, nor indeed were any of the Ministers consulted. Anne had recourse to those persons whom she considered her friends. Argyle, to whom the request was communicated, expressed his indignation at the presumption of his Commander-in-chief. There can be little doubt also that the advice of Harley was secretly obtained. Anne at length replied with a refusal to accede to the Duke's demand. Marlborough was deeply mortified, and his retreat from a false position was not on this occasion conducted with his usual skill

and grace. He fell into the same error against which he had cautioned his wife. He wrote to her Majesty a letter bitterly upbraiding her for her ingratitude, and declared his determination of retiring from her service as soon as the war was ended.*

Thus by the close of 1709 the ancient friendship which Anne had entertained for the Marlboroughs had not only disappeared, but had been succeeded by sentiments of actual dislike and dread. But with this revolution of opinion the world at large could be but little acquainted. Harley, who, through the instrumentality of his cousin, the favourite, must have been well informed of the state of her Majesty's feelings, was wise enough to keep his knowledge to himself. Had the Whigs, however, been perfectly conversant with the position of the Marlboroughs, they would probably at this time have been under no apprehension. They felt now that the support of the great Duke was no longer indispensable to them. They might rest secure in their own strength. It was inconceivable to them how any government could be carried on without their sanction and assistance. Their superiority in both Houses had never been more decided than in the Parliament which met on the 15th of November.

A flattering proof of their position was immediately afforded by the tenour of the royal speech, the most intensely Whiggish oration which Anne had yet pronounced. The Queen expressed her satisfaction in being able to give so good an account of the progress of the war since the last session. In the beginning of the year, she said, their enemies deceitfully insinuated their desire of peace, in hopes of creating divisions and jealousies among the Allies. In that expectation, however, they had been disappointed. Such measures had been taken as made it impossible for them to disguise their insincerity. The operations of the war had not been delayed: a campaign had followed which had been at least as glorious for the Allies as those which

* Coxe's Memoirs of Marlborough; Lord Campbell's Life of Cowper. Swift states in his Memoirs relating to the change of the Queen's Ministry that he was told that Argyle, being questioned by the Queen as to whether any danger would result from refusing to gratify the Duke's demand, replied that he would undertake to seize him at the head of his troops and bring him away dead or alive. This scheme of Marlborough's was always one of the principal arguments used by the Tories for bringing him into unpopularity.

preceded it. It was in this contemptuous manner that Anne, guided by the counsels of her Whig Ministers, delivered herself concerning offers of peace as liberal as any reasonable being could desire; and expressed her approval of the continuance of a bloody, expensive, and apparently fruitless war, which was fast becoming odious to every party in Europe, except to the Whigs, the Imperial family, and to such petty German potentates as were selling to us the lives and limbs of their subjects.

The first measure of the Whigs was to insult the opposite party by parading the achievements of Marlborough. A resolution was passed by the Commons complimenting the Duke upon the great and important successes of the last campaign, successes so remarkable as to render it incumbent upon the House to express the honour and advantage which the kingdom and the whole Confederacy derived through his services. In less than a month supplies upon the same grand scale as in the preceding year had been granted, and the taxes for raising the necessary sums had been renewed. A million and a half was to be borrowed from the public by a lottery loan. It was for the first time during this reign that the Treasury found itself compelled to offer further temptation to Englishmen for the use of their money than good interest, a circumstance indicative that money was becoming scarcer and dearer. This lottery was the commencement of what was doubtless a most vicious system of finance; but it is to be observed that the first State lotteries differed widely from those abominable schemes by which the Ministers of the last half of the eighteenth century and those of the beginning of the present inoculated the whole nation with a taste for gambling. The principle of this lottery closely resembled that by which Austria now allures small capitalists. The possessor of a ticket for ten pounds was entitled to an annuity of fourteen shillings for thirty-two years, and if the ticket were drawn a prize he obtained a much larger annuity, varying between five and a thousand pounds.*

The dry business of the supplies was hurried over, for the House was eager to enter upon the discussion of matter more interesting to the bosoms of most of the members. The nation was then in the first throes of one of those fits of enthusiasm

* Boyer; Lettres Historiques. The loan was a great success.

which so frequently render the Anglo-Saxon race the wonder of foreigners. A High Church doctor had preached a vehement sermon: through certain accidental causes it had attracted attention where thousands of better written discourses had been suffered to drop into oblivion: it had been printed and read by multitudes of all classes: combustible matter, which had been accumulating for years in the public mind, caught fire; and the result had been a general blaze upon the subject of religion.

The clergyman whose preaching had wrought this marvel was Henry Sacheverell, the child of a poor rector in Wiltshire, and the adopted son of a village apothecary. He was sent to Magdalen College, Oxford, at the age of fifteen, where he enjoyed the happiness of being the chamber companion of Addison. From the esteem in which the gentle and sensitive poet held his fellow-student, it may be inferred that the acrimonious spirit which characterized Sacheverell at a later period did not mar the conversation of his youthful days. Both the young men were absorbed in the cultivation of the Muses, and almost the earliest known composition of Addison was dedicated in affectionate terms to his college friend. Long after Addison had departed for London in search of a patron, Sacheverell remained at Oxford in the capacity of fellow and tutor to his college. At length, however, he took orders, and retired to the small living of Cannock, in Staffordshire. The feuds were then raging in Convocation between those two parties into which the Anglican priesthood had divided, and it was not strange that a poor and obscure but ambitious clergyman should sympathize with that party whose object it was to enhance the spiritual powers of the profession. Sacheverell appeared at once as a very decided High Churchman, and a hater, on principle, of the Whigs, who seemed bent on restraining the Church from hunting and devouring her natural prey, the Dissenters. Upon a rustic audience his oratorical powers were probably wasted. But through his connexions he managed from time to time to preach before the judges at the county assizes; and occasionally he published a sermon. In 1705 came the crisis of his life. One of the two preaching chaplaincies at St. Saviour's, Southwark, fell vacant,

and Sacheverell, although probably an entire stranger to the parishioners, was elected to the office by the influence of his friends. Once established in town his talents soon brought him into vogue. With a very vehement style he united the art of pointing his discourse against particular persons under disguises which it was easy to penetrate; and this art, although not without danger to himself, was highly relished by High Church devotees. Anne herself, who had excited his ire by her apparent desertion of the Tories, was, if report be true, not spared by the audacious chaplain.* In August, 1709, he preached at the Derby Assizes, and printed his sermon at the request of the grand jurymen. "Be not a partaker of other men's sins," was the text; and no doubt could rest upon the minds of any who heard that sermon, that the sins against which the preacher meant to warn his audience, were the acts and tendencies of the members of her Majesty's Government. The body of the discourse, plain as its signification was, contained little or nothing upon which a lawyer could found a criminal charge; but the dedication was imprudently outspoken. "It is no little comfort," observed Sacheverell, "in times when the principles and interests of our Church and Constitution are so shamefully betrayed, to find patrons daring enough to own and defend them against the presumptuous insults of one set of enemies and the undermining treachery of another,—patrons who scorn to sit silent and be partakers of the sins of associated malignants." For these remarks the sermon would in all probability have been mentioned to the Parliament when it met, and would have received the honours which that assembly invariably awarded to pamphlets and discourses disagreeable to the majority of the members, of being burnt by the hangman. But before the re-opening, Sacheverell followed up his blow by a sermon infinitely more audacious than the first, and which attained such amazing popularity, that it was no longer possible, at least in the opinion of the Whigs, to confound him with the common herd of libellers. It was preached in St. Paul's, before the Lord Mayor and Aldermen, on the 5th of November, a day which was still commemorated as one of thanksgiving by

* There is a short account of Sacheverell's previous career in Oldmixon's History, and in a note to Tindal. Chalmers's Biographical Dictionary.

the Church and respected as a holyday by Protestant shopkeepers. The text was taken from that passage in the Epistles in which the great apostle of Christianity enumerates, among the calamities of his career, the perils he had encountered among false brethren. The discourse was one continuous diatribe upon the Administration. In very plain terms the preacher anathematized the Toleration, exhorted his audience to rise in defence of the Church, and to put on the whole armour of God. The sermon, it soon appeared, was not to the taste of some of the more influential members of the congregation. The Aldermen decided, in their court, to refuse Sacheverell the customary vote of thanks. It happened, however, that the Lord Mayor for the year, Sir Samuel Garrard, was a Tory. The sermon soon appeared in print with a dedication to that personage. It caught the public fancy, and several large impressions were sold with a rapidity to which the sale of no previous work could afford a parallel.*

The effect of this poisonous publication soon developed itself in the temper and intellect of the people. A philosopher might have thought that Reason had taken her departure from the country. Nine-tenths of the population seemed to be in a state of frenzy. There was a wild fear that the Whigs and Dissenters were about to overturn the Church. The doctrine of non-resistance, ludicrous in the mouth of any one except a Jacobite, was upheld by thousands of persons who, in all probability, would not have raised a finger to assist the Pretender to that throne which, on such principles, was properly his. In truth, the doctrine appears to have been brought forward for no other purpose than to insult and exasperate the Whigs. The movement may be best characterized as a popular uprising against the Dissenters and that party which protected them in Parliament. It is not one upon which an historian, who loves to extol the general good sense of his countrymen, can dwell with satisfaction.

But other causes, besides the alleged progress of the Dissenters, were at work to foster a spirit of discontent. The harvest had been below the average, and high taxation pressed in such a season severely upon the resources of the poor. The

* Boyer. The Lord Mayor took Sacheverell home in his coach to dinner.

complaints against the bakers had been so vehement that Parliament hastened upon its reopening to pass an act regulating the price and assize of bread.* But the indignant population of London had one grievance special to themselves. The act passed in the commencement of the year for naturalizing foreign Protestants had been attended by consequences not altogether such as its promoters anticipated. Its fame had spread far and wide over the Continent, and had excited hopes in the bosoms of thousands of outcasts. From May to November scarce a week had elapsed without bringing scores of poor Germans, chiefly, it was said, from the war-wasted Palatinate, who were eager to enrol themselves as members of the rich, happy, and secure population of this island. The helpless foreigners arrived in London without a farthing of money and scarcely a rag to their backs. They encamped in open places near the capital under tents which, by the Queen's orders, were served out to them from the stores of the Tower. By the middle of June their numbers amounted to between six and seven thousand men, women, and children, and still the poor creatures kept pouring in. There was one large encampment on Blackheath, and another in the fields at Camberwell. Those who had been forward in promoting the act, might well feel appalled at the mass of destitution which they had conjured into the kingdom. But the invitation had been given and accepted, and it was incumbent, therefore, on the honour of the country to maintain its guests. Anne showed her usual kindness of heart by ordering a donation to be made from her privy purse of five halfpence a day to each person, and commissioners were appointed to superintend the distribution of her charity. Collections were also made, at her instigation, in all the churches throughout the kingdom. The richer Whigs exerted themselves particularly, as they were in conscience bound to do, to mitigate the sufferings of the helpless crowd. The foreigners, on their side, showed every disposition to obtain a living by their own industry. Employment was occasionally offered to them, and was cheerfully accepted. But it should seem that the skill of the Germans did not come up to the requirements of English masters. At least one sixth of their number

* This curious piece of paternal legislation is the 8 Anne, c. 19.

were vinedressers; and even those who practised crafts of more utility in this country, had learned them after a fashion that rendered their labour of little value here. Meanwhile the charity accorded to the foreigners had raised a flame of jealousy in the breasts of the native poor of London, who considered that the stream of benevolence was being diverted from its legitimate channel; and so vehement was the clamour against the interlopers that violence was apprehended. One of the arguments employed to deter people from extending compassion to the outcasts was that, even if they were Protestants, they were not of the right stamp of religion. They were not Church of England men: they were nothing better than Dissenters. Perhaps the Whigs had invited them here expressly as assistants to their design of overturning the Church.*

The ferment was so great in London that the Government hastened to remove the offence from the eyes of the population. Some hundreds of the refugees, who owned that they were Catholics, were promptly shipped back again to the Continent. Some were sent to Ireland; others to Scotland. A considerable number were induced to cross the ocean by offers of land and farming stock from proprietors of estates in Carolina. Before the close of the year the encampments had disappeared. But much discontent, nourished constantly by Tory demagogues, still lurked in the breasts of those thousands of unreasoning ruffians who infest a great capital; and while things were in this state Sacheverell's sermon was preached. Every beggar and bully about town had his cue in a moment. A profession of zeal for the Church, and of hatred for her enemies, the Dissenters and Whigs, was a sure passport to the hearts and purses of hundreds of good-natured but simple-minded people, who really imagined that their religion was in danger.

Marlborough thus, upon his return home, found the country in a condition which promised him little rest during that brief period which his duties permitted him to pass in the society of his family and friends. Every member of the Government and the whole Whig party were in a flame of indigna-

* Lettres Historiques; Boyer. Oldmixon says it was conjectured that William Penn, the Quaker, who had large tracts of land in Pennsylvania, was the principal means of tempting the Palatines into England with the design of their being sent out to America.

tion. Godolphin had been roused by this sermon to more anger than had seemed possible for one of his calm good sense and equable temper. In one sentence Sacheverell had inveighed against those men who covered their treachery under the plausible pretence of friendship. In what moving colours, he urged, does the holy Psalmist paint the crafty insidiousness of such wily Volpones! "It is not an open enemy that has done me this dishonour; but it was even thou, my companion, my guide, and mine own familiar friend." Godolphin insisted upon applying this allusion to the unprincipled schemer in Ben Jonson's play to himself; and there can be little doubt that he was right in his conjecture, for the words are evidently pointed against a Tory, and of all the Tories he and Marlborough alone remained in power. The Privy Councillors were generally agreed in thinking that proceedings should be taken against Sacheverell. But there was a difference of opinion as to the advisability of distinguishing this sermon from other seditious writings merely on account of the extraordinary popularity it had attained. Somers recommended that the author should be prosecuted in the Queen's Bench for libel by the same quiet but sure method which had already procured for Drake, Defoe, and twenty other persons who had presumed to criticize the conduct of her Majesty's Ministers the punishment of fine, incarceration, and the pillory.* Both the Attorney and Solicitor-General seem to have given similar advice. But Godolphin was too angry to be satisfied with such ordinary vengeance; and even Marlborough suffered that feeling of fear and hatred which agitated him about every scribbler, however contemptible, to get the better of his prudence on this occasion. His fiery son-in-law, Sunderland, proposed that the Houses should be moved to impeach Sacheverell; and his vehemence appears to have infected the majority of the Councillors.† Upon the 13th of December a complaint of two publications was made to the Commons by John Dolben, the son of a former Archbishop of York. The two were handed in: some passages from the

* Swift's Four Last Years of the Queen. The authenticity of this work has recently been disputed; but unless the letter of Erasmus Lewis of 8th April, 1738, is also a forgery, its identity with the work which Swift certainly wrote on the subject, seems to me at least established beyond all doubt.

† Coxe's Memoirs.

dedication of the Derby sermon and from the body of the St. Paul's discourse were read to the House, were voted libellous; and the author and his printer, one Clements, were ordered to attend at the bar.

The 15th of December was a day of great excitement in the capital. Sacheverell rode up to Westminster in the coach of the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University, amid the applause of an immense crowd. In the Court of Requests he was received by upwards of a hundred of the London clergy, who had assembled for the purpose of encouraging him before going into the presence of the wicked tyrants who had constituted themselves his judges. It is important to notice that the support of the whole body of the clergy, with very few exceptions, was accorded to Sacheverell not merely because he had preached an acrimonious sermon against the Whigs, nor because he had boldly inveighed against the toleration permitted to the Dissenters. Upon both these subjects he had, indeed, the sympathies of the Anglican priesthood. But it was understood that the principal charge which would be brought against him was his assertion of a doctrine peculiarly cherished by the order, and which a very large proportion of the Englishmen of that age considered as almost vital to salvation. No theological quibble that ever divided the opinions of men is perhaps more inane than that touching the obedience owed by subjects to their sovereign. It might be doubtful whether the meaning of St. Paul, in prescribing the political conduct of the Roman converts, really was that Christians should for all time to come return nothing but meek submission to every tyrant who managed to get possession of the civil power. But there could be no doubt that, if such was his command, it never had been nor never would be obeyed in this island. That very generation had driven from the throne a prince who had abused his authority. The last twenty years had been one period of resistance to the lawful sovereign. The clergy themselves, by taking the oaths successively to William and Anne, had been participators in the crime, if it was a crime. Yet still the clergy continued to cling to the idle doctrine of passive obedience, and to inculcate its acceptance by all Christians as a matter of primary importance. The doctrine, assailed and

ridiculed by the Whigs, had now found a champion in Sacheverell; and to this reason may be principally attributed the fervour with which the clergy espoused his cause.

Sacheverell was summoned into the presence of the Commons. He admitted his compositions, and stated that he had been encouraged by the Lord Mayor to print the sermon he had delivered in St. Paul's. He was then ordered to withdraw. As soon as he had departed, the House fell upon the unhappy Sir Samuel Garrard, who was a member. He was asked whether it was true that the sermon was printed at his desire or by his order. The courage of the poor man, a retired grocer, quailed before the ordeal. He mumbled out what every one knew to be a cowardly falsehood, that he had neither desired, ordered, or encouraged the printing. Fortunately for him the Whigs were too intent upon their pursuit of the principal offender to waste time in crushing an accessory. Upon a good-natured suggestion of a friend of Garrard that the House ought to give more credit to one of their own body than to a person who had preached such a sermon, the subject was permitted to drop. Sacheverell was called in a second time, and asked whether he had anything to offer to the House. It was not likely that a man fresh from a circle of enthusiastic admirers, who were hailing and blessing him as the champion of the Church, would admit that he had done wrong, and would ask pardon. The Whigs were highly incensed at the meek unconsciousness of their victim that he had done anything worthy of punishment. As soon as he had again withdrawn a debate began of which no record remains, except the circumstance that some of the Tories made an energetic appeal in behalf of the culprit. It was resolved that Dr. Henry Sacheverell should be impeached for high crimes and misdemeanours, and that a Committee should be appointed to draw up articles against him.

It may fairly be said that the Whigs, in resolving on this impeachment, threw down the gauntlet to at least five-sixths of the nation—to the whole body of the Established clergy, except those few dignitaries who owed their elevation to Whig patronage, to those dense and stolid masses which the Church had the power of drawing after herself, the rustic squires, their tenants, whose piety rivalled and ignorance exceeded their masters,

the rabble of all the large towns who rejoiced in a pretext for turbulence. In truth, the Whigs seemed determined that there should be no mistake as to the position they had chosen. No sooner had the Commons come to a resolution about Sacheverell than the name of Benjamin Hoadly was mentioned as that of a clergyman whose writings in defence of the Revolution entitled him to approval and reward. It was carried that an address should be presented to her Majesty entreating her to bestow upon him some ecclesiastical dignity for his eminent services to Church and State. Hoadly was a controversialist, the most active champion of the doctrines of the Low Church party, and was at this moment what he continued to be to the end of his life, about the most unpopular divine in the kingdom.

It was not until the 9th of January, when the Houses reassembled after the vacation, that the members of the Committee reported themselves ready with the articles of impeachment. The Doctor had meanwhile remained in the custody of the sergeant-at-arms, for his friends had failed in an endeavour to induce the Commons to take bail for his appearance. He was now transferred to the custody of the Lords, who at once accepted the highly respectable parties who were willing to become sureties for him. The most eminent Tory lawyers at the bar had been already engaged as his counsel. Sir Simon Harcourt had the reputation of being the most powerful and skilful speaker of the day, and he brought to the cause of his client a devotion which did not arise merely from professional zeal. He was bitterly incensed against the Whigs. Two years before a petition had been presented against his return to Parliament; and that party, then as still commanding a majority of the House, had, with its usual bias and indifference to justice in such matters, decided in favour of his rival.

Meanwhile an event had occurred which first clearly revealed to the public mind the altered feelings with which the sovereign regarded the most illustrious of her subjects. With the death of the Earl of Essex two appointments had reverted to the Crown,—the lieutenancy of the Tower and the command of a regiment. The Commander-in-Chief of the armies might well expect that in the filling up of military vacancies the sovereign would be guided by his advice, and Marlborough seems to

have entertained no doubt that the Queen would wait to hear his recommendations on the subject. Among the applicants for the lieutenancy who came to bespeak his influence was Lord Rivers. This nobleman had not long since been considered a staunch Whig, but had latterly fallen under the suspicion of being one of those whom Harley was attempting to seduce from his adherence to the party. It had been already determined between Marlborough and his friends that the person to be proposed for the appointment should be the Duke of Northumberland, a natural son of Charles II., an amiable nobleman, who had always stood aloof from politics, and whose preferment, it was thought, would give offence to no one. Rivers, however, pressed his suit warmly, and it was not in the hero's nature to give a downright refusal. He parried the Earl's solicitations with a profusion of polite but unmeaning phrases. At length Rivers inquired whether, if he mentioned the matter to the Queen, he might say that his Grace had no objection to his having the appointment. To this Marlborough somewhat unguardedly returned an affirmative answer. Soon after the interview he requested an audience, and was astounded to learn that the lieutenancy of the Tower had been already bestowed upon Rivers. "He told me," said Anne, "that your Grace had stated you had no objection to him." The Duke perceived that he had fallen into a snare, and retired deeply mortified and disgusted from the royal presence.*

He had not been long gone before a message reached him from the Queen intimating her desire of conferring the vacant regiment upon Colonel Hill, the brother of Mrs. Masham, that "Jack Hill" whom Marlborough had stigmatized to his wife as being "good for nothing." This was too much. Affairs had now arrived at a crisis. The Duke rightly felt that the preferment of this man would degrade him in the sight of his own troops and of the whole world. He requested the advice of his friends, and was assured of the cordial support of the whole Whig party. He then waited upon the Queen. He represented the mischief that would accrue from promoting a young officer before many others his seniors and possessing far greater claims to distinction. "It is, Madam," said he, "to

* Swift's Change in the Queen's Ministry; Coxe's Memoirs.

set up a standard of disaffection to rally all the malcontent officers of the army." But Anne showed the mulish obstinacy of her race. Arguments and entreaties were alike thrown away upon her. "You will do well to consult your friends," was all the reply that Marlborough could obtain to his remonstrances.

The Duke was determined not to submit, and took his departure from town. In his absence a cabinet council was held, at which the Queen, according to her custom, presided. Two years before, when Marlborough had absented himself from a similar meeting, the attention of her Majesty had been drawn to the circumstance by the Duke of Somerset. But Somerset was no longer a friend of the great general. He was a weak and foolish nobleman, whose arrogance had earned for him the soubriquet of "the Sovereign." He was eager for distinction, and nourished a pique against Marlborough and the Whigs for failing to recognize his capacity to fill some of the most important offices of State. Upon such a mind as his Harley had practised with success; and Anne, who was now undoubtedly busying herself about forming a party, had completed his conquest by bestowing upon him some marks of favour. There was no other member of the Council who had the courage to perform the part which Somerset had enacted in 1708, and the meeting broke up without any allusion having been made to the absence of the Commander-in-Chief.

Marlborough at this conjuncture formed a resolution which, had it been carried into effect would, in all probability, have placed a very different face upon the events of the next succeeding years. There could be no longer any doubt that the Queen was surrounded by persons not only hostile to his own ascendancy, but who were teaching the sovereign to conspire against her own Ministers. It was through Mrs. Masham, he firmly believed, that filtered those poisonous counsels of which he and those who were joined with him in the management of her Majesty's affairs so constantly felt the effects. He was convinced that there could be no amendment of this state of things so long as that lady remained in the palace. He wrote, therefore, the draft of a letter to the Queen in which, after dwelling upon the mortifications he and his wife had experienced through the agency of Mrs. Masham, he submitted to

her Majesty the alternative of dismissing from her service either that lady or himself.*

Had this letter been sent, and had Marlborough persisted in his determination to resign unless his demand was gratified, it is difficult to see how Anne could have avoided compliance. The boldest of her Majesty's secret advisers might well recoil from the ferment which would be assuredly excited by the retirement at a critical period of the war of the most successful general who had ever issued from the country. But Marlborough, in the management of concerns of this delicate nature, showed none of that reliance on his own judgment which he manifested in his military conduct. He would not act without the approval of his friends. The letter was submitted to Godolphin and the leading Whigs, and occasioned some warm debates. Sunderland was for adopting a still stronger measure than that suggested by his father-in-law. He thought that an address could be obtained from both Houses of Parliament for the dismissal of Mrs. Masham, and Walpole was of the same mind. The poor Treasurer was thrown into a tremor of alarm at the mention of expedients so violent. The picture, perhaps, arose before his mind of a nation inflamed to fury by the representations of the Tories that the Queen was in the hands of a wicked and ambitious faction, who were heaping every indignity upon her. He wrote, entreating his friend to return immediately to town, or the warmth of some heads might commit errors which could never be retrieved. Most of the Whigs had the same fears as Godolphin, and strongly disapproved of employing any harsh measures with the sovereign. Even the Duchess thought that her favourite son-in-law was, in this instance, exceeding the bounds of prudence. Somers, meanwhile, had been assaying the effect of his calm and polished oratory upon the mind of Anne, and flattered himself that he could discern in her some signs of yielding. He joined Godolphin in persuading Marlborough to return to town and improve that favourable disposition towards which the Queen seemed to be tending. It was not easy to convince the Duke against his better judgment; but he so far yielded to the entreaties of his friends as to

* Coxe's Memoirs.

abandon his resolution of resigning unless Mrs. Masham were dismissed. He dispatched to Anne a letter, in which he omitted all mention of this alternative, but represented in pathetic terms the mortifications to which he had been exposed through the counsels of Mrs. Masham and her cousin Harley. "I beg your Majesty to reflect," he continued, "what your own people and the rest of the world, who have been witnesses of the love, zeal, and duty with which I have served you, must think, when they see that all I have done is insufficient to protect me from the malice of a bedchamber woman."*

Before this letter reached its destination, however, Anne had yielded the point immediately in dispute. Both she and her favourites were becoming alarmed at the determination evinced by the Duke and by the menaces of that powerful party which supported him. There had been already words dropped among the Commons capable of exciting the apprehension that the differences between her Majesty and the Commander-in-Chief might be made the subject of a debate in the House. Composed as that House now was, there was but too strong a probability that the grievances of the victorious general would create warm sympathy, and that the Commons would, at the suggestion of some hot-headed zealots, vote an address offensive to the dignity and painful to the personal feelings of the sovereign. The back-stair counsellors judged wisely, therefore, that the time was as yet unripe for pushing matters to extremity against Marlborough. Anne sent for Godolphin, and informed him that she intended no longer to insist upon the regiment being given to Colonel Hill. A few days afterwards the Duke was admitted to an audience, and was received with a kindness which was doubtless dissembled, and which he doubtless estimated at its true value.

While these events, so strongly indicative of Anne's disposition, were passing, the attention of the Commons had been almost entirely absorbed with the proceedings against Sacheverell. The articles exhibited by the committee of impeachment were four in number. The first of these articles, and the one upon which the greatest stress was laid, was stated in a manner calculated to perplex a modern reader. Sacheverell

* Conduct of the Duchess; Coxe's Memoirs.

was a divine of that school which asserted the unlawfulness of resisting the sovereign under any circumstances. To maintain this doctrine without impugning the legality of the late Revolution, might well seem impossible; and a consequence most uncongenial to all the non-resistance divines, except such as were Jacobites, would follow if the Revolution were illegal. Both William and Anne, whose titles depended upon the Revolutionary establishment, would be nothing better than usurpers. The Tories had, however, at a very early stage of the controversy, invented a means of escape from this dilemma. King James had not been deposed by his subjects. He had abdicated, and left the throne vacant. If any resistance had been made to him, it would have been unlawful; but there had been none. The first article against Sacheverell charged him, therefore, with maintaining that the necessary means employed in bringing about the Revolution were odious and unjustifiable; with asserting that there had been no resistance to the sovereign; and that any person who declared there was, cast black and odious colours upon his late Majesty and the Revolution.

The second article charged him with inveighing against the toleration granted to Dissenters; the third with suggesting that the Church was in danger, in contempt of a vote passed by both Houses of Parliament; and the fourth with asseverating for seditious purposes that her Majesty's administration, both in civil and ecclesiastical affairs, tended to the destruction of the constitution.

These articles were not adopted by the House without an attempt by the Tories to get them recommitted. The proposal to charge the defendant with endeavouring to excite sedition called forth especially some vehement remonstrances. But the party was so weak as to be able to muster only one hundred and thirty-one votes against two hundred and thirty-two. A somewhat lengthy and circumstantial answer to the articles was soon put in on Sacheverell's behalf, and amounted upon some points to a denial, and upon others to a justification of the crimes imputed to him. The committee of impeachment to whom it was referred, reported that it contained matter plainly designed to reflect upon the honour of the House. One Tory, alarmed perhaps by the formidable artillery which was fabricating for

the destruction of the culprit, and apprehending that a sentence might be passed upon him altogether inconsistent with the degree of his offences, implored the House to desist from the impeachment, and to leave Sacheverell to the ordinary course of justice. It would have been happy for the Whigs if this piece of advice, which had been already offered by the more moderate men of their own party, had received the attention it deserved. It seemed, however, that nothing would satisfy the bulk of the members but an opportunity of vindicating in the most public and signal manner their favourite doctrine of the lawfulness of resisting an evil sovereign. The Lords had fixed a day for trying the culprit at their bar. This arrangement would have made it impossible for more than a very few of the Commons to witness the proceedings, and the desire of assisting as spectators at the ceremonial was almost universal. It was accordingly intimated to their Lordships that the Commons wished to be present at the trial as a committee of the whole House. Her Majesty, having been informed of this circumstance, issued orders for the preparation of Westminster Hall as a court of justice.

Never since the famous trial of the seven bishops had the feelings of Englishmen been so profoundly excited by any matter of public interest. The triumphs of the war, the hopes of speedily concluding a glorious peace, were for the moment forgotten. The politicians of the coffee-houses cared to discuss nothing but such questions as whether William resisted James. The Doctor's health and his happy deliverance from his persecutors had become the reigning toast in every Tory circle. Portraits of the martyr and descriptions of his person were in great request. Pamphlets, written in a style resembling that in which rival American editors abuse each other, issued each day from the press, and were roared about the streets by hawkers. But it was noticed that the hawkers of the Tory broadsides had everywhere the best of the competition, as the Whig salesmen were compelled to cry their wares in modest fear of the mob. The executive meanwhile stood aloof in impotent rage. One man, an astrologer, who published some predictions favourable to the public wishes, was arrested. But the Tory squibs were generally anonymous, and such was their number,

that to trace the authors might well be considered as a desperate undertaking. Hoadly thought this a proper time for issuing a ponderous volume on civil government, and elicited from some Tory controversialist a threat that, unless he retracted his offensive opinions touching passive obedience, both Universities would be moved to pass a censure upon his writings.*

In the meantime Godolphin had been reduced to a state bordering on despair by the unavoidable departure at this terrible crisis, of that friend upon whose powerful intellect his own timid and vacillating nature was accustomed to lean in times of difficulty. News had reached England that a renewal of the conferences for peace was expected, that Louis had agreed to accept all the articles except the thirty-seventh, and that the States were about to send passes for the French plenipotentiaries. The Whigs, eager for any opportunity to parade the importance of Marlborough, at once resolved upon an address requesting her Majesty to direct the immediate departure of the hero for Holland. The address was drawn in a style which might well provoke the opposition it in reality met with; for, in truth, no form of words could reveal more plainly the frame of mind in which the Whigs were disposed to enter upon the negotiations for peace. No amount of earnestness on the part of the King, no sacrifices he professed himself willing to make, however humiliating, could, it seemed, eradicate from this party the conviction that his offers were meant for anything but a snare. The Commons declared that they were alarmed by the crafty and insinuating designs of France, in amusing them with deceitful expectations of peace which were intended to create divisions among the Allies. They thought it therefore their duty to represent to her Majesty the importance that the Duke of Marlborough should be abroad at this juncture, and they would take that opportunity of expressing their sense of his great and unparalleled services, and of applauding her Majesty's wisdom in honouring the same person with the great characters of commander-in-chief and plenipotentiary. This address, disagreeable as it was to the Tories, was carried by the usual strong majority of the Whigs, and was presented to Anne. Godolphin

* Boyer; Lettres Historiques.

had prepared for her a reply fully answering the hopes of the promoters of the address; but Anne rejected it in disgust. She was weary of echoing the praises of the great Duke. She refused to refer to him, as Godolphin desired, as "the chief instrument of her glory and of her people's happiness." She would simply tell the deputation that she had given orders for his departure. This was her own thought, she said. It had not been suggested by any secret adviser. Not without great difficulty was the Queen at last persuaded to return to the deputation such an answer as would not cause downright offence to the Whig party and the numerous circle of Marlborough's admirers. A few days before the day fixed for the trial of Sacheverell, the Duke took his departure for Holland.*

The 27th of February, the appointed day, arrived. By that time Westminster Hall had been transformed by the skill of Sir Christopher Wren into a court of justice capable of seating an immense number of spectators. Under his hands the venerable chamber had assumed the form of an amphitheatre. The greater portion of the floor of the building was reserved for the Peers. To their right the benches of the Commons, covered with green cloth, rose tier above tier almost to the roof. A similar arrangement of benches on the left, concealed by a simple matting, afforded accommodation to several hundreds of persons who had been fortunate enough to obtain from the Lord Chamberlain tickets of admission to the ceremony. Behind the seats of the Peers had been fitted up two closely-curtained boxes, the one for the use of the Queen, who had intimated her intention to be present, and the other for the diplomatic body. Immediately in front of the Peers was the bar; and behind this were ranged four rows of benches for the use of the managers of the prosecution and the counsel for the defendant.

By noon a hundred and thirty Peers in their robes had taken their places, and the culprit, supported by many friends, among whom the Whigs recognised with uneasiness more than one of the royal chaplains,† appeared at the bar. His coach, in

* Coxe's Memoirs.

† Burnet. Atterbury and Smallridge were conspicuous among the friends of the culprit.

passing from his lodgings in the Temple to Westminster, had been attended by an excited crowd, whose shouts were still heard in the solemn stillness of the Hall as the sergeant-at-arms summoned him to stand forward. He made a step in advance, and knelt down at the bar. The Whigs, who hated the man and were perhaps already awakening to their folly in having raised him to such undue importance, imagined that they could detect, even in this posture of humility, a lurking confidence in the issue of his trial.

The formal reading of the articles, of the defendant's answer, of the dedication of the sermon preached at Derby, and of the sermon preached at St. Paul's, opened the proceedings. After hearing speeches from two lawyers, who were among the managers of the prosecution—Sir James Montague, the Attorney-General, and Mr. Lechmere—the Lords adjourned to receive the Queen, who had given notice of her design to visit their House that afternoon for the purpose of giving her assent to several Acts. Anne was loudly cheered as she passed through the crowd in her sedan-chair. "God bless your Majesty and the Church!" was the general cry. "We hope your Majesty is for Doctor Sacheverell." The Doctor's coachman found it a difficult matter to penetrate the concourse of people on his return to the Temple. The rush was tremendous to get near enough to kiss the hand of the saint, of the good man who was ready to lay down his life for the Church. Every window and balcony along the Strand was filled with ladies striving to catch a glimpse of the martyr, and waving their handkerchiefs. Every hat in the crowd below was raised as the coach passed. Some members of Parliament who had mingled with the throng were hustled for refusing to show this mark of respect to the popular idol.

The trial thus commenced extended over a period of three weeks. Anne took sufficient interest in it to appear in her box almost every day. And in truth the variety of oratorical talent displayed by the managers of the prosecution, the artfulness and pathos with which the defendant's counsel rebutted the imputations cast upon their client might have diverted the most indifferent spectator. In one respect the prosecutors laboured under a disadvantage. They were aware that the

feelings of the nation were against them, and were powerfully enlisted on the side of their opponents. The mere spectacle of such mighty machinery as that now brought forward to crush a poor clergyman had excited public sympathy on behalf of the victim, and a conviction that the party in power were cruel oppressors. The prosecutors were in consequence far more intent upon setting themselves right with the public than upon making good their charges against the defendant. Much ingenious and elaborate argument was expended in vindication of the Revolution, in demonstrating the blessings and advantages which had flowed from it, and the danger which would result if persons were permitted to preach or write against it. Now it could admit of no doubt that an attempt to excite discontent with the Revolution was a treasonable offence. Upon the lawfulness of the Revolution depended the validity of every Act of Parliament which had been passed since 1688, of that Act in especial which had settled the crown successively upon the posterity of William and Mary, of Anne, and of the Electress Sophia. The Whigs, therefore, seemingly for no other purpose than to obtain the credit of being zealous for her Majesty's title and the Protestant succession, exhausted their powers of rhetoric to prove that to be a criminal offence which was so indubitably. What they were bound to establish was that Sacheverell had in reality denounced the unlawfulness of the Revolution. He had certainly upheld in the most unqualified terms the old and cherished doctrine of the Church as to the passive obedience due from subjects to their sovereign, and the sinfulness of resisting him under any pretence. Yet at the same time he had used expressions which, however inconsistent they might seem with this doctrine, appeared to denote satisfaction with the revolution actually accomplished. The Revolution had, according to him, been effected without resistance. James had run away; and his subjects, finding the throne vacant, had very properly and lawfully elected a successor.

In the first article of impeachment therefore submitted to the judgment of the Peers there were three points to be considered. First, was resistance to the supreme power lawful in any case? Secondly, had resistance been employed to effect the Revolution? If they decided in the affirmative upon these two points they

had then to determine whether the preacher's unqualified condemnation of resistance did not imply, by natural inference, condemnation of the Revolution. The arguments by which the prosecutors strove to convince the understandings of the judges were ingenious; but an historian of the present day might well despair of interesting his readers in a question which would now be thought as frivolous and absurd as the disputes between ecclesiastics in the days of Duns Scotus. The fiery Stanhope drew blood into the cheeks of the poor Doctor by a contemptuous allusion to him as "the insignificant tool of a party." There is not, however, a morsel of evidence to show that Sacheverell was prompted to his work by any lay politicians. However his enemies might abuse him, he seems really to have been as disinterested, pious, and well-meaning a fanatic as ever made mischief in this world. And it must not be forgotten that, whether he was guilty or not of an offence in the eye of the law, he only expounded a little more freely and vehemently than his brethren of the cloth a doctrine almost universally professed by the clergymen of the Established Church.

The ruffians of London were at all events determined to show their zeal for the Church and their antipathy for its supposed enemies. The crowd on the second day of the trial was still greater than it had been on the first, and it soon became evident that it was bent on mischief. Having escorted Sacheverell back to his lodgings, his admirers went off to relieve their feelings by breaking the windows of a Presbyterian meeting-house in Carey Street, near Lincoln's Inn Fields. The officiating clergyman of this establishment was Daniel Burgess, a remarkable divine who enjoyed in the days of Anne a reputation somewhat similar, though on a far less extensive scale, to that enjoyed by Spurgeon in the days of Victoria. His wit was as conspicuous as his piety, and if his hearers failed, through the hardness of their own hearts, of being edified by his discourses, they never missed of being entertained. The jokes and oddities attributed to him are numerous, and are perhaps exaggerated; but from the specimens that remain of his sermons it may be concluded that Burgess would have thought he had preached ill if his congre-

gation had not frequently rewarded him with a burst of laughter.*

This commencement of outrages acted upon the passions of the multitude like the taste of blood upon a wild beast. On the following evening the doors of the same house were broken in, and the place was ransacked. Pulpit, pews, wainscoting, everything that would burn were dragged out into the Fields to make a bonfire, which was encircled by street savages who danced and howled with delight. "High Church and Sacheverell!" "Down with the Presbyterians!" were the cries which rendered that night dismal to the peaceful inhabitants of the metropolis. The rioters soon extended their ravages to fresh places. A mania for pulling down the meeting-houses of Dissenters had got possession of them. Wild reports as to their designs flew about London. Prayers for assistance poured into the Secretary's office from every part of the town, from the managers of the prosecution, who had received threatening communications, from nonconforming ministers whose places of worship on both sides of the Thames were already attacked, and from the Bank of England. Sunderland went in all haste to the Queen. Her ordinary body-guard was the only military force which, being always under arms, was ready for an emergency; but the Earl was reluctant to incur the responsibility of borrowing it. Anne, however, told him that she had no fears on her own account, and bade him make use of her defenders. "God," she piously said, "would be her protection." The commanding officer, a rough and punctilious soldier, was with difficulty prevailed upon by the Secretary of State and the Lord Chancellor together to undertake the service that was required of him. His post, he declared, was the palace, and if anything were to happen while he was absent he was certain he should be held accountable. He at last consented to march, but upon the point of setting out another difficulty presented itself to his mind. "Am I to preach," he asked, "or fight the mob? If I am expected to do the first, you must send with me a better speaker than myself. My trade is fighting." He was told to use his discretion, and to

* There is a considerable number of Burgess's sermons and works on religion in the British Museum. Bolingbroke was for a short period his pupil.

resort to violence only when absolutely necessary. The appearance of the soldiers in the streets very soon restored order. They marched from Whitehall to Lincoln's Inn Fields, from thence to Drury Lane, where the mob was ransacking the chapel of another Dissenting preacher named Tom Bradbury, whose jovial humour and eccentricities of style constituted an entertainment for the Londoners on a Sunday, and from thence into the City. The rioters at most points dispersed at the mere sight of the red-coats. A few heads were broken where resistance was made, and two or three of the most obstreperous of the throng were taken into custody. If any attack upon the Bank had been seriously meditated a detachment of six dragoons proved sufficient to avert it. The mischief to property effected during the night was limited to the destruction of half-a-dozen meeting-houses.*

In this outbreak of public feeling there was really little cause for alarm. Yet the Londoners could not easily forget the apprehensions they had felt. Prompt measures were taken on the following day to prevent all recurrence of riots. The trained bands of London and Westminster were called out, and stationed in different posts, at which they remained until the conclusion of the trial. The Whigs were, as a matter of course, convinced that the turbulence of the populace was solely due to the villanous arts of the Tories. They caught, however, at the opportunity of repairing their credit in the eyes of the public by attributing the disorders to the Papists. An address upon this subject extorted from Anne a proclamation which would have disgraced her Government had there been any serious intention of following it up. All Papists, other than merchants and householders, were commanded to remove to a distance of ten miles from the capital.

The trial proceeded. Three entire days were taken up by the speeches of the managers of the prosecution. Upon the fifth day Sir Simon Harcourt entered upon the defence. The Doctor, he argued, in asserting in general terms the doctrine

* Boyer; Lettres Historiques; Oldmixon; Burnet. Details respecting this riot may be found in the trial of Daniel Dammaree in Howell's State Trials. The literature arising out of the cause is too vast to particularize. Several treatises upon the subject are in Somers's Tracts and the Appendix to Boyer's Annals, vol. ix.

of passive obedience, had but followed the Scriptures and the examples set by the most eminent divines of the Church of England. Was a preacher, when he laid down a rule, bound to mention any exceptions there might be to it? St. Paul commanded servants to obey their masters, and children to obey their parents; but although the apostle mentioned no exceptions to these general laws, it would be absurd to suppose he intended there could be none. Was a master or parent who enjoined murder or robbery to be obeyed? In the same manner, when the Doctor asserted the duty of subjects to yield passive obedience to their sovereign, he might have relied upon the common sense of his hearers to supply one necessary exception to the general rule, namely, the case of the Revolution.

The counsel for the defence attempted to meet the charge brought against Sacheverell of inveighing against the Act of Toleration by a quibble which in these days a lawyer of reputation would disdain to employ. The Doctor had in his sermon spoken with outrageous vehemence against the allowance of any toleration to Dissenters. He had even gone the length of declaring that heterodoxy was a crime which ought to be punished by the civil magistrate. He had called Archbishop Grindall a false son of the Church and a perfidious prelate for persuading Elizabeth to commence the system of toleration by permitting the doctrines of Geneva to be preached. His counsel now gravely maintained that his words did not necessarily imply a reference to the act which had been passed in favour of Dissenters by the Parliament of 1689. That act made no mention of toleration: there was, indeed, no such word to be found in it; and under these circumstances it could not be said that any toleration had as yet been granted by law to the Dissenters. What the Doctor must be taken to mean by his invectives was such a general toleration as would tend to the dissolution of all things, such a toleration as would make our religion, like that of the Samaritans, a mixture of all kinds of abominations. The resort by counsel to a line of defence so technical might well create an impression that the cause was indefensible on wider grounds. There could be no doubt in any mind that for the last twenty years the act in question had been termed in ordinary parlance the Act of Toleration.

It had been even alluded to under that term in royal speeches and Parliamentary addresses.

The defence set up to the charges brought in the third and fourth articles amounted to this: that the passages in the sermon upon which they were founded were so vague and ambiguous that they might mean almost anything. It is difficult to conceive how any member of Sacheverell's congregation could have attached any other meaning to the preacher's words than that the Church was in danger, and this through the machinations of the treacherous and wily statesmen who were in power. But the Doctor, in the midst of all his vehemence, had been prudent enough to say nothing definite, to express himself only in general terms, and to leave it to his hearers to apply the meaning. It was now contended that to assume any reference to the Queen or her Ministers was gratuitous and unfair. Why should not the Doctor have intended merely to denounce those ordinary sins and vices against which clergymen were bound to be for ever declaiming? Was there a time in the history of the world when religion was not in danger from wicked men, thieves and adulterers, scorners, atheists, and setters up of false doctrine?

Upon the eighth day of the trial Sacheverell himself brought the defence to a close by reading a speech which occupied nearly an hour in delivery, and which was framed with an argumentative clearness, a pathetic beauty of diction such as raised a presumption that it proceeded from a mind better skilled in the art of composition than his own. The saint, in a manner which drew tears from every fair Tory who had the happiness to hear him, alluded with mournful bitterness to the circumstances of his martyrdom. He himself was, it seemed, but the insignificant tool of a party, a creature not worth regarding. To fix then, by means of his person, an indelible brand of infamy upon all who maintained the doctrine of non-resistance was the avowed object of the impeachment. The example of his punishment was to teach the clergy what doctrines they were to preach, and what they must abstain from preaching. The searcher of all hearts was his witness, as he expected acquittance before God and his holy angels, that he had no wicked, seditious, or malicious intention in anything he

had said. He had no design to asperse the memory of his late Majesty, to traduce or condemn the late happy Revolution, or to arraign the resolutions of Parliament. In place of endeavouring to foment disturbances, all his wishes had been to promote the loyalty and obedience of his fellow-subjects.

The speech, regarded merely as a piece of composition, was elegant and forcible. It was quickly in print, and circulating to the remotest corners of the kingdom. In almost every household it aroused the warmest sympathy for the man whom the public had invested with the glorious character of a martyr. A cooler judging posterity may perhaps dispute the truth of the culprit's asseveration that he was animated by no seditious motive. The question is, what did in those times constitute sedition? A subject of Queen Victoria, accustomed to criticize her Majesty's Ministers and their measures with impunity, and who not unfrequently hears the highest tribunals in the land censured from the pulpit for judgments not in accordance with the opinions or interests of the orator, may smile at the notion of imputing sedition to a clergyman merely for preaching a hot political sermon. But in the days of Anne the case was far different. The words of authors and preachers were jealously watched. The courts had decided in innumerable cases that any reflection either upon the Government or its measures constituted a seditious libel. Defoe, for an offence of this nature, had been punished with merciless rigour; yet the criminality of Defoe might have seemed much harder to bring home than the criminality of Sacheverell. What was the plain meaning of that sermon but to inveigh against the Toleration, and to denounce that class of Ministers who restrained the Church from oppressing the Dissenters? There can be little doubt therefore that the sermon was seditious in the eye of the law, and that had it come before Holt and twelve unbiassed jurymen the author would have been punished. Defoe, in attacking the Tories under the disguise of ironical praise, might have thought himself secure; but it is inconceivable that Sacheverell could have employed language so unmistakably calculated to excite discontent without knowing at the same time that it would be adjudged seditious. The impulses of his conscience, the love of dictating, that thirst for persecution

which commonly rages in the breast of a priest, or the vanity of making a sensation, may have rendered him regardless of consequences; but his sermon had a seditious tendency from one end to the other, and he must have known it.

Two days more were taken up by the prosecutors in replying to the defence. The most applauded speech, a fine example of terse and animated logic, was made by a counsel who, from the drudgery of a provincial attorney's office, had industriously worked his way to the highest reputation at the bar. He had not long to wait for the reward of his eloquence from the grateful Whigs. Two days after Holt died, full of years and honours, and the "silver-tongued" Parker became Lord Chief Justice of England. That same year the great seal was offered him, but was prudently declined. It may not be uninteresting to relate that among the counsel employed in this memorable case were three future Lords Chancellor of England and one Lord Chancellor of Ireland, two Lords Chief Justice besides Parker, a Master of the Rolls, and two puisne judges. Cowper, who now occupied the woolsack, gave place in a few months to his political rival, Harcourt. Sir Peter King, who, like Parker, had won his way to legal eminence chiefly by his steady application to business, and to whom had been assigned the task of maintaining the charge contained in the second article on account of his theological lore, became Lord Chancellor in 1725. To the brilliant career of Parker, who, with the title of Earl of Macclesfield, filled the highest judicial office during the interval between Harcourt and King, was destined a mournful close. Fifteen years after the date of this prosecution the Lords again assembled in Westminster Hall to sit in judgment on their fellow peer, the eloquent counsel who was now pleading before them. For the second time in the annals of English justice a Lord Chancellor was impeached by the Commons, and proved to have disgraced his high trust by bribery and corruption.

The pleadings having now closed, the Lords withdrew to their House, leaving the public to speculate as to what their verdict might be. Ten days elapsed before they reassembled in Westminster Hall, and meanwhile the anxiety was as great as if the fate of the country depended upon their deliberations. The clergy in their sermons and prayers made no secret of their

sympathy with the culprit, and so entirely were they on this subject in unison with their congregations, that the diocesans could hardly venture to reprehend them. Compton, the Tory Bishop of London, found himself, however, compelled to suspend one audacious preacher for offering up a prayer for the deliverance of the Doctor from his persecutors in the chapel at Whitehall.

Upon the 16th of March the Lords took into consideration the first article of the impeachment in the presence of Anne who, according to her custom in matters of great public interest, attended in her private gallery. The only speech in favour of Sacheverell that has been preserved is by Haversham. It was, he observed, the hardest case imaginable that this unfortunate gentleman should be singled out for preaching a doctrine asserted in homilies and sermons, by universities, by archbishops and bishops without number. A sneer at some members of the existing bench for voting against the doctrines of the Church roused two prelates to defend at great length the principles upon which they intended to act. Burnet set himself to prove that, although the homilies might strongly inculcate obedience to the civil power, the meaning of the writers had not been that Christians should yield themselves up as blind slaves to unjust tyrants. The design of the founders of the Protestant Church could not have been, he argued, to teach this lesson, for they had retained in the sacred writings, as good examples for our instruction, the books of the Maccabees, which contained the history of a rebellion against a lawfully constituted but abused authority.

But the arguments of the good and learned Bishop on this matter were now scarcely needed. By almost every educated man the absurd theory that sovereigns are entitled to unlimited obedience seems to have been already discarded. The counsel for the defence had not for one moment denied the lawfulness of subjects resisting under certain provocations, although they had very properly declined to define what should be the intensity of such provocations. Nor did one Tory peer now venture to impeach the right of resistance in the people. But the question was whether the doctrine of passive obedience could still be asserted in the old unqualified manner without

indirectly assailing the lawfulness of the Revolution. An argument urged by several peers on behalf of the culprit was that his sermon was nothing but a series of silly and unmeaning words, and that it was monstrous to treat nonsense as a crime. The question was at length put that the Commons had made good the first article of the impeachment. All the Whigs voted, as might be expected, in the affirmative; all the Tories in the negative; and the Whigs had a majority of nineteen.

No Tory seems to have thought it worth while to offer any defence for Sacheverell upon the charges contained in the second article. There was a short debate on the third. But the fourth, which charged him with maligning the administration of the Queen and her Ministry, elicited some long and not uninteresting discourses. Burnet, whose hearty zeal for every measure which had been apparently attacked by Sacheverell, the Revolution, the Toleration, the Union, had made him perhaps the most eager of all the peers to carry the impeachment, was again the prominent speaker, and afforded no little diversion by his blundering vehemence. Nothing, he asserted, could be plainer than the culprit's design of reflecting on her Majesty's Ministers, for one of them had been so well marked out by an ugly and scurrilous epithet that it was impossible to mistake him. There was a roar of laughter. "Name him, name him!" was shouted by a dozen peers with a wicked anticipation of fun. Godolphin, the unhappy Volpone to whom all eyes were directed, must have experienced the most uneasy moment of his life. The Speaker interposed in all haste; but perhaps not a moment sooner than was necessary to prevent the Lord Treasurer's name being blurted out by the simple-minded Bishop. "No peer," observed Cowper, "is bound to mention what he considers to be needless." It is a good exemplification of Burnet's singular deficiency in a sense of the humorous that, even after this warning that his words were capable of a malicious construction, he should have employed a similar sentence in his history. "The Lord Treasurer," said he, "was so described in the sermon that it was next to naming him."

It was at length carried that the Commons had made good all the articles of impeachment, and after disposing of several

technical objections offered by Tory peers, the Lords on the 20th of March again assembled in Westminster Hall. Sacheverell, surrounded by a group of friendly divines, appeared at the bar, and the Lord Chancellor then called upon the junior baron present to say whether in his opinion the defendant was guilty or not guilty of the high crimes and misdemeanours charged against him by the Commons. The question was then put to the next junior peer, and in this order of precedence the suffrages of a hundred and twenty-one peers were collected. By sixty-nine a verdict of "guilty" was returned; a minority of fifty-two adjudged the culprit "not guilty." The list of names with the answers appended is not without use as an indication of the political party to which each peer belonged.

The Whigs had thus by sheer preponderance of numbers in both Houses carried the impeachment to a successful issue. But it was a victory which no member of the party could regard with entire satisfaction, for it had indeed been dearly purchased. It was impossible to misunderstand the general feeling of the nation. All the ingenuity and eloquence which the managers of the prosecution had expended to prove that the impeachment was necessary as a vindication of the glorious Revolution and for the security of the Protestant succession, had failed to shake the public belief that the object of the party in power was to overthrow the Church in the person of Sacheverell. To many Whig members of the House of Commons loss of popularity was certain to entail the loss of their seats. In another year a fresh election must take place, and there could be little doubt that in any county or borough where the electors were not as absolutely under the power of some local magnate as the sheep and cattle of the place, a Whig candidate would have no more chance of success than he had in 1660 or 1685. The members of the Upper House were raised by birth or fortune above the necessity of paying court to the nation, but even they showed signs of quailing before the storm of public fury. There was a general disposition among the Whig peers to make the sentence upon Sacheverell extremely lenient. At the next meeting of the House a motion was made that he should be prohibited from preaching for seven years, during which time he should be incapable of hold-

ing any ecclesiastical benefice, and that he should be imprisoned for three months. The Tories, however, succeeded with very little difficulty in reducing the term of prohibition to three years, and the Whigs did not insist upon the clause relating to the imprisonment. Considerable discussion was excited by the clause precluding the culprit from holding during his suspension any additional preferment to that which he at present enjoyed. Without some provision of this nature it was but too probable that his punishment would be a mere nullity. There could be little doubt that, out of the multitude of rich men who espoused his cause, more than one patron would hasten to lay an offering at the feet of the saint. The duties of the living could be performed by a substitute; and thus the practical result of the trial would be that the culprit would be rewarded for his high crimes and misdemeanours with a good sinecure. So anxious, however, were many of the Whigs to propitiate public opinion, that even this necessary clause was negatived, although by one vote only. A harmless addition to the sentence which provided for the burning of the obnoxious sermon by the hangman, passed, it would seem, without exciting any comments.

CHAPTER VI.

INTELLIGENCE of the mild sentence sped fast through the capital. Upon the evening which closed the day on which the debate in the Lords took place the houses of many people were gay with illuminations, while bonfires blazed in several of the streets of London and Westminster. The martyr had escaped almost unscathed from his persecutors; the public was mad with joy; and many of the devotees who danced and howled about the bonfires were soon intoxicated by drinking to the health of their favourite. The trained bands were forced in some quarters to disperse the rabble to prevent the consequences of another ebullition of feeling against the Dissenters and the managers of the prosecution.*

When the Commons met on the following day depression and mortification were so visibly expressed in the countenances of the Whigs, that their adversaries ventured to indulge a hope that they would not proceed to demand judgment against the culprit. But in this they were mistaken. In the Lower House as in the Upper the signs were evident that confusion was in the ranks of that phalanx which had lately seemed so compact and impenetrable. But in spite of the timidity of a few members there was no shrinking in the main body of the party from carrying the cause to its proper termination. Upon the 23rd of March the Speaker, accompanied by a deputation of the members, went in form to the House of Lords. Sacheverell, upon his demand, was brought to the bar by Black Rod, received his sentence upon his knees, and the Commons had then to bear the annoyance of hearing him return thanks to their Lordships for the clemency they had shown him. The next morning found the grateful saint, escorted by

* Boyer; Burnet; Tindal; Oldmixon.

a mob of butcher-boys and apprentices, going a round of visits to those members of both Houses who had voted in his favour. As his sentence precluded him only from preaching, he was still at liberty to read the service in his church at Southwark to a congregation which seemed never to weary of the aspect and tones of the martyr. For many months the press sent forth few books that had not the Doctor for their subject. There were Whiggish treatises in which he was abused in terms which in these days would be thought uncourtly if applied to a dog; and there were treatises in which the uninteresting doctrine of passive obedience was discussed in a grave style which conduces to sleep. But the gentlemen of Grub Street were not long in finding out that books on this side of the question were not remunerative. The more religious or politic authors could count their readers by the thousand. There was the "Pious Life and Sufferings of the Doctor from his birth to his sentence, with his prayers and meditations on the days of his trial." There was a "Loyal Catechism, in which every English subject might be instructed in his duty to his prince in a dialogue between Sacheverell and a young pupil." And there was a ballad which exhorted young couples to be married by no other clergyman than the Doctor.*

The Tories were naturally in raptures at the turn events had taken; but the Whigs still held firmly together, and in Parliament were much more than a match for their adversaries. A great point with the former, in their much-prized character as guardians of the Church, was to draw public attention to the number of irreligious works which, under the rule of a Whig Administration, had recently made their appearance. In truth, since the emancipation of the press, scarcely a month had passed without some crazy person exciting a sensation in religious circles by publishing a book to show the absurdity of the Christian religion, or to prove that the doctrines and ceremonies of the Church have been erroneously deduced from the Scriptures.† Sacheverell's counsel, in support of their argument

* Boyer; Lettres Historiques.

† Conspicuous among literature of this description was a work of John Asgill, member for Bramber, in Sussex, who set himself to prove that, if a Christian had a sufficient stock of faith he might be translated to heaven without passing

that their client had just cause to apprehend danger to the Church from the spread of irreligious and blasphemous writings, had been at the pains to make a collection of passages from a number of obscure and stupid pamphlets. This collection of impieties had been read at the trial for the edification of their Lordships. That authors of this kind were on the increase there could be no denying; yet to insinuate, as seems to have been the principal motive of the Tories, that this increase was owing to any moral or religious laxity on the part of the Government, was at least grossly unfair. Not a session had passed since the accession of Anne, that Parliamentary censure had not been laid upon some bad book, and that the Attorney-General and the hangman had not been employed to teach the authors the imprudence of publishing opinions upon religious subjects in advance of their age. The Tories, with the double motive of testifying their own zeal for the Church and of conveying an imputation upon their rivals, now moved that her Majesty should be requested to proclaim a fast for the purpose of averting the divine vengeance, which the nation had reason to dread on account of the horrid blasphemies in circulation. By the Whigs a most artful and ingenious amendment was suggested to this resolution. The little collection used in Sacheverell's defence had by some means found its way into print. It was now proposed to refer to this book as one peculiarly displeasing to the Almighty, and to attribute the wickedness of circulating it to the Doctor himself. This suggested addition to the address so captivated the fancy of the Whigs that, notwithstanding their adversaries would have been now glad to desist from their project altogether, the motion was pressed to a division, and carried by a large majority. The Queen, as might have been expected, coldly refused to comply with a request which, under the pretence of zeal for religion, conveyed all the uncharitableness of party spirit. The Whigs were forced to content themselves with ordering that Sacheverell's collection should be burned in company with two or three impious books which were censured at the same time. A servile decree made by the University of

through death. This fanatic was expelled the House, not, however, on account of his insanity, but his heterodoxy.

Oxford in 1683, during that fit of ecstatic loyalty which succeeded the discovery of the Rye House plot, was deservedly included in the same ignominious fate.*

The period of the year had now arrived at which it was customary for the Parliament to separate. It was accordingly prorogued by Anne with a speech which, although regarded by the Tories as merely indicative that her Majesty was still in the thraldom of Whigs and false brethren, contained some really excellent exhortations. Inasmuch, she observed, as no prince who ever sat on the throne could have had a more tender concern for the Church than herself, or had ever been more ready to suppress immorality or profanity, she could not but regard it as a great injustice that, because an evil existed which was prevalent in all times, it should be made an occasion of imputing danger to the Establishment under her administration. She could heartily wish that men would be quiet and mind their own business instead of instituting disputes upon this subject. Such persons, she thought, must have some evil intentions in what they did, as disputes of this kind only fomented divisions and animosities. The Parliament, she added, in consideration of the circumstance that negotiations for peace were proceeding in Holland, would be prorogued only for a very short time.

To one individual at least the prorogation was felt as a relief. The daily divisions, the perpetual bickerings, which had made this session an epoch of confusion, the indiscretions of many of the Whigs, and the open exultation of the Tories at their blunders, had been too much for the nerves of Godolphin. From the bottom of his heart he wished that the impeachment of Sacheverell had never been attempted.† His friend's departure just on the eve of the trial reduced him to such a state of apathy that Sunderland wrote to press his mother-in-law, who had accompanied the Duke as far as Harwich, to return immediately to town and inspire the Lord Treasurer with a little

* Boyer; Lettres Historiques; Oldmixon.

† Godolphin to Marlborough, March 5—16. "This uneasy trial of Sacheverell does not only take up all my time, but very much impairs my health, and how it will end I am not at all certain. But I certainly wish it had never begun; for it has occasioned a very great ferment, and given opportunity to a great many people to be impertinent who always had the intention but wanted the opportunity to show it."

life, or everything would fall to ruin.* The terrible Duchess was soon with the craven, and it should seem that her goad was applied in this instance with beneficial effect. Godolphin succeeded, at all events, in restraining Anne to the very close of the session from revealing—at least by any overt act—her sympathies with one party or her disgust of the other.

Nevertheless it could be no longer matter of doubt that the Queen and her secret advisers were revolving a plan of action. The question really was how long their courage would be in reaching the point necessary to take a step which Marlborough might resent by throwing up his command, and which would raise against the Court the overwhelming power which the Whigs at present possessed in both Houses. The Treasurer and the Duchess kept up a cat-like watch upon the actions of Anne. The number of Tory noblemen and gentlemen, they remarked, who attended her public receptions had much increased of late, and the honour of being admitted to the royal closet was also extended to an unusual proportion of them. The frequency with which two noblemen especially were favoured in this manner filled the jealous pair with uneasiness. One of them, the Duke of Somerset, had not long since been reckoned among their staunchest friends. The other, formerly a distinguished servant of William, had returned some years back, after a long interval of luxurious idleness passed in Italy, to resume an interest in the politics of his native country—the all-accomplished but faint-hearted Duke of Shrewsbury.

The influence of both these noblemen appears to have been lost to the administration merely by the neglect of such a degree of management as was necessary to secure it. Both professed those opinions which constituted a Whig in that age; and both were warm admirers of the genius of Marlborough. Somerset had but two years since rendered an important service to the Treasurer and Commander-in-Chief

* Sunderland to Marlborough, February 21, March 4. "Lord Treasurer has a slowness and coldness about him that is really terrible, and therefore all that can be must be done to keep him up and to animate him. I am sure it will be impossible to do it without Lady Marlborough. . . . . If Lord Treasurer can but be persuaded to act like a man I am sure our union and strength is too great to be hurt."

by assisting to rid them of a colleague who was undermining their power. Although unfitted for any position requiring a higher range of abilities than that of Master of the Horse, he was not a man whom it could be safe for any administration to overlook. Independently of his rank as second, or at all events third, on the list of English nobility, his immense territorial possessions and consequent influence over the returns to the Lower House, rendered him important as a friend or an enemy. But how to come to any satisfactory arrangement with a man whose vanity was perpetually aspiring to stations which he could not have filled without bringing ridicule and contempt upon the whole Government, was a problem which Godolphin and the Junta despaired of solving.* All the thoughts of the Duke were in consequence directed to pulling down those Ministers who would not permit him to rise; and he had so far stifled his pride as to enter into some kind of alliance with Harley, a man whom he certainly disliked and despised. With Anne, who was perhaps taken by his solemn and pompous manners, his influence was now thought to be paramount, and that influence was increased by the possession of a wife for whom her Majesty entertained a greater degree of friendship than she had evinced for any lady since the decay of her affection for the Duchess of Marlborough. The Duchess of Somerset was, to the end of this reign, a valuable assistant to the schemes of her husband. Those schemes, however, extended no further than to the removal of some two or three persons from the Ministry, who had excited the ire of the proud Duke.

Shrewsbury, having returned to his country with a revived appetite for honours and distinctions, found his old friends now in power but little disposed to admit him to partnership or even to trust him at all. Nor is it strange that the Whigs should have regarded this accomplished and graceful nobleman with a feeling not far removed from contempt. The perilous and anxious times which immediately preceded and followed the Revolution had afforded statesmen a rare opportunity for obtaining an insight into mental and moral constitutions; and the flaws in Shrewsbury's character had been conspicuous. So long as the political horizon was serene, and a high position in

* Godolphin to Marlborough, March 17—28.

the State could be filled without danger to life or fortune, there could be no more charming colleague. But with the first cloud that appeared all considerations of party, of country, were flung away, and the man seemed to think only of saving himself. The Duke must have been conscious that his former associates had some justification for the coldness of their reception; and to be despised by men whom he had once led and whom he now aspired to lead again, was a reflection that caused him deep pain. But there was another motive besides resentment against the Whigs which induced him at this season to coalesce with their rivals. He had with his usual nervous fear of committing himself carefully scrutinised the position of the Ministry. He had waited upon the Duchess of Marlborough, with whose husband he had always been on terms of cordiality, and had artfully contrived to extract from her how matters stood between the Queen and her principal servants. His final opinion, founded upon all the information he could collect, was unfavourable to the prospects of those who were now in power. Before the trial of Sacheverell his resolution had been taken, and his vote in favour of the Doctor could leave no one in doubt of the course he intended to pursue.*

No sooner had the Parliament separated than Godolphin, worn out with a harassing session, hastened to his country seat at Newmarket, and tried to forget his anxieties for an interval in the society of his racehorses. But the repose of the unfortunate Minister was soon interrupted by a letter from the Queen, which made him return, almost distracted with mortification and alarm, to London. Anne announced to him that she had thought proper to take the chamberlain's staff from the Marquis of Kent and to bestow it upon the Duke of Shrewsbury.† Godolphin revolved in his mind how it became him to act. It may well seem matter of wonder that, constantly as the dread of Anne's taking some independent step of this kind must have haunted her Ministers, there should have been no

* Marlborough was surprised at this open declaration on Shrewsbury's part. "What amazes me is that he could think it possible for the Tories to be strong enough to ruin the Whigs in conjunction with the Lord Treasurer and me." This sentence shows that Marlborough, with all his keenness of judgment, greatly overrated the security of his position.

† The Queen to Godolphin, April 13—24. Kent was made a duke "for being easy in the matter."

arrangement between them as to what they should do when the event happened. It may appear even strange that any provision for such a contingency should have been necessary. How a body of Ministers would act at the present day, if the sovereign should, without previously asking their advice, dismiss one of them from his service, is scarcely a subject for speculation. They would be thought wanting in spirit and self-respect if they did not all insist upon resigning. But in the earlier part of the eighteenth century the relations between Minister and Minister, and between the sovereign and the Ministers, were not so well defined as now. A member of the administration seems not to have considered it dishonourable to endeavour to supplant his colleagues in the favour of the sovereign. The sovereign seems not to have considered that he was acting unjustly by his Ministers if he sought advice from irresponsible parties. In this reign Harley had, while in office, striven to undermine the Queen's confidence in Marlborough and Godolphin; and her Majesty had not thought it unbecoming to concert measures with Somerset, Shrewsbury, and Harley against a Ministry of which she desired to be rid. No sooner was a Tory administration formed than St. John was struggling to compass the ruin of Harley, while Anne—there are grounds for believing—was in the habit of consulting some of the discarded Whigs. A few years later Stanhope, Townshend, and Walpole were all disputing for the first place in the confidence of George I., who notoriously attached more weight to the counsels of his German favourites than to those of any of his English Ministers.

Thus that bond of union which now exists between the members of an administration did not exist between the Ministers of Anne. Each individual appears to have considered himself free to act without concert with the rest; and to this circumstance may be attributed the downfall of a Government under which the country had at all events enjoyed a marvellous amount of military prosperity. Had the whole body, and above all Marlborough, determined on relinquishing her Majesty's service the moment it became clear that she was not disposed to be guided by their counsels, it is difficult to conceive how Anne, situated as she was, could have done other-

wise than submit to their conditions. The Ministers were generally unpopular on account of their supposed design to oppress and overturn the Church; but the continuance of Marlborough at the head of military affairs must at this critical period have been felt to be indispensable by the great majority of the nation. The secret advisers of the Queen would scarcely have ventured, in the face of a clearly-expressed determination on the part of the great soldier to resign, to encourage her Majesty to proceed with her design of changing her servants. But it soon became evident to them that they need entertain no apprehensions on the score of the Commander-in-Chief; that, do what they might, they would meet only with a mild expostulation from him. Whether Marlborough's conduct was regulated by honourable or merely selfish motives is a question which must unfortunately remain open to the end of time. Those who are prone to put the worst construction upon a man's actions will affirm that every feeling was subordinate in his mind to his love of money, that he was one who could see his nearest friends treated like lackeys, could bear every kind of insult heaped upon himself, and still cling to office for the sake of his enormous salaries. But there will always be others who will more charitably pronounce that his leading motive in retaining power till it was forced out of his hands was to prevent his country from being made the victim to a faction which, having been always adverse to the war, would too probably fling away the advantages acquired by years of success, and hasten to conclude an unsafe and inglorious peace.

The course adopted by Godolphin was one which, without saving his dignity, only rendered him a little more odious and contemptible in the eyes of Anne. He dispatched to her a letter which, as a specimen of the style in which her Majesty was addressed by her chief Minister, is a curiosity. He reproached her in pretty round terms for permitting herself to be directed by a private Ministry. Her conduct, he said, would draw ruin upon herself and the kingdom, and would force every man in the Council, except the Duke of Somerset, to run from it as he would from the plague. He put it to her what effect an entire change of her Ministers was likely to have upon her Allies abroad, and whether the war would be carried on well

by people who had been averse to it from the beginning. Having relieved his mind by these expressions, the poor Treasurer thought it expedient to return to his humility, and assured her Majesty that, for his own part, he would never give the least obstruction to her measures or to any Ministers whom she might please to employ.*

Godolphin speedily followed his letter to town, but only to find his august mistress in a very bad humour. Anne, as her nature was when vexed or unhappy, preserved a silence so sullen and obstinate as to render it impossible to penetrate what her wishes or intentions were. At first the Treasurer greatly feared that further changes were in contemplation, and that the staff would soon be demanded from himself. But his apprehensions gradually wore off. Shrewsbury paid him a visit, and, with that grace and suavity of manner which made men designate him as the "King of Hearts," professed his devotion to him and to the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough. By whatever door he came in, he said, it was with the intention of living well with them all. The jealousy with which the Whigs regarded him had been, he was persuaded, the sole cause of his having been kept so long out of office. Had the matter rested merely with his friends, the Treasurer and the Marlboroughs, the thing, he knew, would have been done long since.† The effect of these blandishments was to delude Godolphin into a belief that, now Shrewsbury had obtained what he desired, he would join with them in endeavouring to restrain the Queen from making any further changes; that he would revert to his former politics and be a good Whig again. The fears of Marlborough, however, to whom this conversation was reported, were not so easily allayed. He was satisfied that the Queen would never have ventured upon such a step as the dismissal of the Marquis of Kent unless her advisers were prepared to carry things further. His chief wonder was that so timid a person as Shrewsbury could have found the courage to embark on such troubled waters in company with the greatest knaves in the kingdom. He advised his friend to use every effort to prevent a dissolution of Parliament. If

* Godolphin to the Queen, April 15—26.
† Godolphin to Marlborough, April 30, May 11.

that should come to pass he was convinced that all would be over.*

In truth, the preservation of the existing House of Commons had now become of vital importance to the Ministry. Every day brought fresh proofs that, if the nation had the opportunity of declaring itself, an overwhelming preponderance of Tories and High Churchmen would be sent up to Parliament. It appeared that the population of the provinces shared the feelings which had been evinced by the mob of London. The spring assizes commenced immediately after the conclusion of the trial; and at almost every town to which the judges repaired their presence was made the signal for some violent demonstration of the religious and political views of the inhabitants. Those Whig lawyers, who had been among the managers of the prosecution, were in no slight danger, while travelling on circuit, of having their eyes and teeth knocked out by brickbats. Their adversaries, on the other hand, were almost stifled by the rough caresses of the crowd. Both at Shrewsbury and Hereford, Harcourt was publicly thanked and entertained by the respective Corporations. The Corporation of Gloucester summarily dismissed his opponent Lechmere from his post of assessor of the borough. Upon the day when Sacheverell's sermons were burned in front of the Royal Exchange bonfires were kindled at Exeter and Winchester, and some of Hoadly's books were ignominiously tossed into the flames.† The middling classes, actuated by the same feelings as their inferiors in wealth and education, hastened to display their zeal for the Church and the doctrine of passive obedience by sending up addresses to the throne. There was a prevalent notion, however, that Anne, although doubtless a Tory at heart, might still be hampered by the power of the Whigs, and many municipal bodies were put to great embarrassment to convey an unmistakable meaning in such words as should not force her Majesty to feign displeasure. In most instances, therefore, the addresses were couched in such terms as would puzzle a reader not intimately acquainted with the political cant of the day to detect their object. A pattern address, it

* Marlborough to the Duchess, May 5—16.
† Lettres Historiques; Luttrell's Brief Relation.

has been asserted, was drawn up and circulated by Tory agents; and it is certain that, however different corporations might differ in their modes of expression, there was a striking similarity between their thoughts and sentiments. A horror of republican maxims, of Deists and Socinians, an enthusiastic devotion to monarchy and the Church were common to all addresses; but the Toryism of this language was somewhat relieved by a comparatively cold expression of attachment to the Hanoverian succession. Some corporations ventured to throw out hints that a dissolution of the Parliament would be acceptable to the nation. The city of Gloucester was, much to the mortification of the citizens, represented at this time by Whigs. The Sheriff and Grand Jury now assured her Majesty that when another Parliament was elected care should be taken to return such members as would be devoted to herself and zealous for the Church.*

The Whigs, anxious, dispirited, and almost everywhere in a minority, still, however, struggled to maintain their position. Some addresses were got up on their side. The address of the Sheriff and Grand Jury of Worcester formed an amusing contrast to that from the neighbouring city. These gentlemen expressed a fervent hope that her Majesty might always be served by such a wise and judicious Ministry, such a faithful and courageous General, such a dutiful and affectionate Parliament, as now made her reign the glory of the British monarchy, the envy of her neighbours and the terror of her enemies.

The deputations which came with these addresses were graciously received, and were generally dismissed with a few words of thanks. But the obstinate taciturnity of Anne made even her own Tory favourites sometimes doubtful as to her intentions. She was still readily accessible to old friends although on the Whig side. Burnet, who thought himself entitled to rank in this category, went to her and spoke his mind with a downrightness which even that freest of all friends, the Duchess, could scarcely have surpassed. He had heard it reported, he said, that she had given encouragement to a scheme for settling the crown on the Pretender after her

* A selection of these addresses is printed in Boyer's Annals.

death. If that were true it would be well if her people set about defending themselves from Popery by inviting over the Protestant successors; and unless she would take pains to contradict the report he himself would be the first man to concur in such a remedy. He was also amazed, he continued, at a rumour that she was about to change a set of Ministers who had served her with such fidelity and good fortune.* Anne heard him out with placid patience; and the good Bishop retired happy in the belief that he had made a deep impression, that he had discomfited all intriguers, had saved the Administration, and preserved his countrymen from the calamities of Popery and being made the slaves of France.

For Burnet, Anne still retained a respect arising in part from his sacred profession, and in part from the high esteem in which she knew he had been held by a beloved and deceased sister. There was, however, another strenuous Whig whose lectures she could not endure with the same calmness. The importunities of the Duchess to be restored to favour had become the principal annoyance of her life. One day she received from this extraordinary woman a packet containing a long narrative of the services she had rendered during six-and-twenty years, and the narrative was supplemented by extracts from the works of different divines bearing on the mutual obligations of friends. Then Anne was solicited to grant her an interview. Her Majesty shrank from the proposal with horror. Again and again she parried it by desiring the Duchess to put what she had to say into writing. But Mrs. Freeman relied too confidently upon her power of language to be satisfied with approaching her old friend in this manner. What she had to say, she replied, could not well be committed to paper. She did not require an answer: she only wanted her Majesty to hear her. At length, after having experienced several mortifying evasions, she was admitted to the royal chamber. It seems that the Duchess had heard that some of the saucy remarks upon the stupidity of the Queen with which

* Burnet prefaces the story of his conference with her Majesty by saying that "he was encouraged by the Queen to speak more freely to her of her affairs than he had ever ventured to do formerly." I should be sorry to doubt a bishop's word, but if he really did utter what he sets down in his history, his assurance was amazing.

she was in the habit of regaling her acquaintance had reached her Majesty's ears, and she was now desirous of clearing herself from the vile imputation of having slandered her benefactress. Anne listened to her discarded favourite for some time with sulky impatience and with her back turned. "Of course I know," she remarked, "that there are many lies told." Mrs. Freeman begged hard to be informed what particular offences were laid to her charge, but Anne remained as cold and inflexible as marble. "I will give you no answer," she said. "You desired no answer, and you shall have none." The poor Duchess burst into tears, and importuned with all her old vehemence and volubility to know how she could have offended her Majesty, but the only effect of her eloquence was to quicken Anne's desire to put an end to the scene. "You desired no answer, and you shall have none," she kept repeating, and this was all that could be extracted from her. At length the Duchess, provoked beyond endurance by such conduct in one whom she regarded much in the light of a revolted vassal, gave a loose to her insolence. "I am sure," she cried, "your Majesty will suffer in this world or the next for your inhumanity." "That is my business," returned the Queen, who immediately withdrew from the chamber, and from the society of Mrs. Freeman for ever. It was the last time that this pair of ladies, so opposed in temper and opinions, yet once united by the closest ties of affection, met in private.*

The reflections with which Marlborough returned to the Continent must have been painful indeed. It was clear that the affections of the Queen were now withdrawn not only from his wife but from himself; that with all his genius, glory, and great achievements he must henceforth consider himself as nothing but a common servant permitted to retain his employment so long as he was of use, but who must expect to be discarded with coldness, perhaps with ignominy, the moment his services could be dispensed with. Such feeble hopes as still buoyed up Godolphin, such a flattering sense of power as still upheld the spirits of the Whigs, could not mislead a judgment like his. He was too well acquainted with the Stuart character to indulge expectations that Anne might yet be

* Conduct of the Duchess; Coxe's Memoirs.

induced to turn aside from a fixed purpose. He foresaw the calamities which would happen; the Administration changed, the Parliament dissolved, a Tory majority returned by the country, and a set of men placed at the head of affairs who would render nugatory the advantages acquired by eight years of successful warfare. One thought could never have been absent from his mind. The close of the war would be the end of his public career. From a position more splendid than that enjoyed by any subject in Europe he would sink to that of a private nobleman out of favour at Court and possessed of no influence whatever. The conclusion of a peace would entail upon him a loss of sixty thousand pounds a year in regular salaries, and of percentages and perquisites which perhaps amounted to as much more.

The sea upon his arrival at Harwich was as gloomy and agitated as his own feelings. For a whole week he was detained by contrary winds in this small fishing town. He then embarked, was wafted to within sight of the Dutch coast, and was again blown back to England. In a few days he made another trial, and after a rough and tedious passage reached the Brill on the 7th of March. Four days afterwards he and Townshend were present at a grand conference of the representatives of the Allied Powers. Buys and Vanderdussen, the two deputies of the States-general chosen to confer with the French plenipotentiaries, had returned to the Hague to report what new offers his Majesty had to propose.

It may be inferred from the choice Louis this time made of his agents that his hopes of any successful result accruing from their labours were not great. Instead of a Minister of the highest rank or of a diplomatist so experienced and respectable as Rouillé, two men were selected to act as plenipotentiaries who were little better than adventurers, Marshal d'Uxelles and the Abbé de Polignac. The former had been for a long period governor of Alsace, but the command of a remote province did not satisfy his vanity. In the mere hope, it should seem, of being employed in some matter of importance, and of attaining to the supreme honour of conversing personally with the great monarch, he returned to Paris and spent his time in paying servile courtship to Mademoiselle de Choin, the unacknowledged

wife of the Dauphin. The mortifications and frequent disappointments inseparable from this mode of existence were now beginning to tell seriously upon his health. The Abbé, a clever and fascinating creature, was the admiration of all the ladies and feeble-minded princes about Versailles, but had never yet been employed upon any grave political errand.* It was to these two persons, whose appointment created no little surprise at Court, that Torcy delivered the King's instructions, as his Majesty only condescended to admit the Marshal to a few minutes' conversation, and declined altogether to see the Abbé. The principal thing which was urged upon them was to get their antagonists to consent to Philip's retaining some fragment of his dominions, a concession which would enable his Majesty with a better grace to ask his grandson to resign the throne of Spain. They might even offer four French frontier towns to the Allies as a pledge of his Majesty's sincerity to facilitate by every reasonable means his grandson's resignation. All the other articles forwarded to him the last year, humiliating as they were, he was willing to accept. There was but one demand which he would never entertain, and that was to join the Allies in expelling his grandson from Spain by force of arms.†

At the Hague but faint hopes were entertained by the public of any satisfactory result from these renewed conferences; and even those hopes waxed fainter when it became known that they were to be held, not in that city where statesmen and ambassadors from every court of Europe were congregated, and where all that passed would be immediately known, but in a lonely and remote spot to which only two deputies from the States-general would have access. The affair, it was easy to see, would be in the hands of a clique which could make what reports or give what turns they pleased to any offers which came from the most Christian King. Wagers against a peace being concluded were freely offered at the odds of three to one. The first conference took place on board a yacht, anchored between two of those dreary islands which just emerge above the water off the Dutch coast; and the result augured ill for

* The character of these two personages are drawn by St. Simon.
† Mémoires de Torcy.

the parties coming to terms. Buys, as in the previous year, scouted the proposition of yielding an acre of land to Philip; and the mild Vanderdussen acted no other part than that of listening to the vehement and interminable harangues of his colleague. It was then proposed to the Frenchmen that the negociations should be continued at Gertruydenburg, a melancholy village at the mouth of the Waal, inhabited only by a few fishermen, and rarely visited by any traveller. The unhappy courtiers, accustomed to the gaieties of Versailles and Marly, durst not refuse their consent to this living burial. A second conference ended, however, in the same deadlock as that of the preceding day; and the deputies returned to the Hague, leaving the Marshal and the Abbé to write to their master for further instructions, and until his answer should arrive, to amuse themselves in their solitude as they best could. The worst of the matter was, that there seemed no probability of any good resulting from their expenditure of time. Not only would Buys and Vanderdussen hear of no substitution for the article importing that his Majesty should engage in an unnatural war with Spain, but cold-blooded hints were thrown out by Buys that, when a treaty of peace came to be finally settled, fresh sacrifices still, in addition to all which had been mentioned in the preliminaries, would be required of France. Under such circumstances, the plenipotentiaries could form no other opinion than that their adversaries had set their faces determinedly against peace, and that their only object in consenting to renew the conferences was to escape the imputation of being desirous of continuing the war, and to delude the world into a belief that the fault lay in the obstinacy of the French king.

It is not difficult to account for the inflexible spirit which animated Buys and Vanderdussen. That the States-general were, of their own motion, inclined to prolong the contest, seems indeed incredible.* The exhaustion of several of the Provinces was great; and this fact had been frequently adduced by the representatives of the Republic to account for any short-

* Marlborough says expressly (March 18—29), "The States-general are positive in putting an end to the war at once by giving the Duke of Anjou a partage."

comings in the fulfilment of their engagements. They had no longer anything to gain by fighting. Peace would leave them to reap in tranquillity the harvest amassed by eight years of war. The barrier of towns now offered them exceeded anything they could have hoped to obtain upon commencing the struggle with France. That Philip should be allowed to retain Naples or Sicily or Sardinia out of all his dominions, could be of small import to them; and it would be strange indeed if they had not thought that peace would be cheaply purchased by such a concession. In fact, it was so commonly reported that a majority of the States-general were desirous of closing with this expedient that the Imperial envoy, in alarm lest his master should be called upon to disgorge some of his conquests in Italy, hastily memorialised both that assembly and the representatives of the Allied powers against any concession being made to Philip. It is not likely that the Dutch counsels were influenced by any fear of what the Emperor could do. But the Imperial arguments assumed an appearance of weight when they were supported by the representatives of Great Britain. The States-general discovered, in short, that their consent to any modification of those articles which had been submitted to Louis, would infallibly draw down upon them the wrath of all the other confederate powers combined. Their only safe course to pursue, therefore, was to go on, and frighten or force the King into compliance with the original demands of the general body.

To the public it seemed as if some dark hand was constantly stretched out to thrust back the Angel of peace; and there were not wanting persons uncharitable enough to affirm that this hand was Marlborough's. Of this opinion was Argyle, who was in the habit of uttering his sentiments about the camp in a manner that caused considerable annoyance to the hero. The career of this variously gifted nobleman had not been less brilliant in the field than in the senate. He had endeared himself to the soldiery by sharing in all their labours and perils, and by frequent displays of personal courage. A more daring leader of a forlorn-hope, a man who so thoroughly enjoyed himself in the thickest of the fire, had not been seen since poor Cutts died of a broken heart at being transferred to a pacific

appointment. He had, however, conceived a violent enmity against Marlborough, an enmity which was thought to have sprung from his cognizance of the Duke's attempt to be made Captain-General for life. Peace, he persisted in declaring, could be had when the Commander-in-Chief pleased. Marlborough complained bitterly of the injustice done him by such remarks. "I must," he observed in a letter to Godolphin, "venture my life every summer, and be found fault with every winter, for not bringing home peace, though I wish for it with all my heart and soul."*

It was a frequent profession of Marlborough's that he was determined to be guided solely in his conduct as a plenipotentiary by the instructions he received from home. His mind, he declared, was "blank paper." What was the nature of his instructions is sufficiently perceptible from our knowledge of the sentiments of the leading Whigs at this time. A strange infatuation had got possession of the understandings of all the English Ministers with but one exception. The tales which were current in England respecting the awful distress prevailing in France had given rise to a delusion that Louis could not much longer maintain his armies in the field, and that, however his personal feelings might create delay, he would very soon be forced to accept the most cruel terms that could be proposed to him. The devoted loyalty which had been exhibited by the French nation, the power of a despot to ransack his dominions and leave the women and children to starve in order that his soldiers might eat, nay, that famine itself must perforce drive large numbers of the peasantry into the army where only bread was to be found, were considerations which Anne's ministers appear to have overlooked. Cowper, who could not understand how the most mighty and solid military power in the world could be so utterly broken by a few disastrous campaigns, was sharply reproved by Somers for presuming to express a doubt whether the King of France would ever consent to such terrible sacrifices as were required of him by the Allies.† It is quite certain that Marlborough was of the same mind as

* Marlborough to Godolphin, June 12—23. In a letter of March 25, April 5, he says, "I cannot have a worse opinion of anybody than of the Duke of Argyle."

† Cowper's Diary.

Cowper. But his opinions he did not now think fit to obtrude on the Ministers. He was content to be as "blank paper" in their hands.

Marlborough remained at the Hague but a week. Every preparation had been already made for the campaign, and it was deemed advisable, while the diplomatists were at work, to strengthen the hands of Buys and Vanderdussen by obtaining a few more successes over the troops of Louis. He and Eugene left together, reached Tournay, near which city the army had been directed to re-assemble, on the 17th of April, and their forces were at once set in motion. The French, who had not expected any movement so early, were taken completely by surprise, abandoned a series of lines they had constructed upon the Dyle, and fell back to Arras, thus allowing the Allied generals to accomplish their first object, the investment of Douai.

And now recommenced that routine of sieges to which it seemed that the war with France would henceforward be reduced. To conquer one by one the fortresses which protected the northern frontier of the kingdom, and thus to penetrate by slow but safe degrees into the heart of Louis's dominions, was the work which lay before the Allied army. The fortifications of Douai, although nearly surrounded by water, enjoyed but a second-rate reputation for strength. Its investment, however, had been expected. The French commissaries had succeeded by great exertions in wringing from the famine-stricken neighbourhood sufficient provisions to fill the magazines of the city. The artillery was abundant: the garrison had been raised to eight thousand picked men; and the command had been given to Albergotti, a lieutenant-general in high renown for skill and bravery. The valour of the defenders was soon shown by a furious sortie made while the Allied troops were still digging trenches and constructing their parallels. Two fine English regiments, which had been posted to guard the workmen, were cut in pieces.

A whole month went by before the French army, which had been slowly re-assembling near Cambrai, was in a condition to take the field. Villars, who had risen from his bed of sickness with spirits as sanguine as ever, was again the marshal to whom Louis entrusted his principal army. In truth, his

Majesty was fascinated by the confident tone in which his champion vowed his purpose of seeking out the enemy and retrieving every previous disaster by a great victory; nor can we doubt that Villars, who really was fearlessness personified, did intend, if it were possible, to make good his assertions. It was necessary, however, that there should be a second commander of approved skill who might be ready to take his place in case of another disaster happening to him or of his being laid up; for he still walked with crutches, and could with difficulty sit his horse. At his instance, therefore, the King requested Berwick to repair to the camp. Two other marshals of inferior renown, Montesquieu and Harcourt, were also present to aid him in case of need. The Chevalier de St. George, whose amiable manners had made a complete conquest of his heart, was constantly by his side. The soldiers he found, when he reached his head-quarters, as ragged and famished as he found them the previous year, while their numbers had so diminished that a battalion, which should have averaged five hundred men, rarely consisted of more than three hundred and fifty. But of this deplorable state of affairs he affected to make light. It was the first rule in his military system that the lower the effective strength of a commander might be the loftier should be his promises of what he meant to do. His first measure, taken with a view of striking terror into his adversaries, was to give out that his force amounted to a hundred and sixty thousand men, a number greater than that of which it actually consisted by at least one fourth. He then treated his officers to a ball at Cambrai; and the next morning began his march towards the Allies, breathing out predictions of vengeance and victory to every soul within hearing of him.*

The French came on so resolutely, and approached so near the Allied position that Marlborough and Eugene hastily made preparations to defend themselves. The siege was partially suspended, and the bulk of the troops was marched into a camp on the west side of Douai, which had been previously marked out and entrenched. Only a few miles of open plain intervened between the hostile armies. Villars, who was anxious to do something to redeem his magnificent promises, rode forward

* Mémoires de Villars.

with his brother marshals to reconnoitre the Allied works. The result of the scrutiny was, however, to convince everybody that to hazard an attack upon them would be sheer madness. Villars himself, although he did not cease blustering, appears, after this personal inspection of the difficulties before him, to have abandoned all thoughts of volunteering an engagement. He remained, however, in the neighbourhood. Berwick, perceiving that there was no further likelihood of a battle, took his leave and returned to the army of Dauphiny.

Albergotti, after defending Douai with a spirit which extorted the admiration of the Allied generals and earned for him some gracious expressions of gratitude from Louis, capitulated on the 25th of June. The Allies thus succeeded in adding to their list of conquests one more city at a cost of eight thousand men, a number equal to at least one half of the inhabitants of the place. In one respect Douai possessed and still possesses an importance altogether disproportionate to its population. It has been the destiny of few cities to produce such an amount of mischief in the world. It formerly rejoiced in a seminary, founded by a misguided countryman of our own for the purpose of teaching the youth of England that the commands of the Romish priesthood superseded the mere human obligations of loyalty and patriotism. It had then become, in 1362, under the auspicies of Philip II., the seat of an university for the training of priests, and from its printing-presses, as from an arsenal, issued an inexhaustible supply of missals designed for the destruction of the Protestant religion. It is now one of the principal foundries of cannon in France.

Marlborough was at this period experiencing a degree of mental anguish to which no mere military success could afford any alleviation. During the five weeks the army lay before Douai he had received ample proofs from his friends in England that Anne was bent upon mortifying him by every means in her power. He had framed a list of officers for promotion in such a manner as to stop just short of the names of Masham and Hill, the brother-in-law and brother of the favourite. The eyes of the Queen, when this list was laid before her by Walpole, at once travelled down the paper in search of these very names. She angrily demanded why they were not included, and signified

her determination that, unless their commissions were made out, she would sign no others. Marlborough could not but feel that the promotion of these persons would furnish convincing evidence both to the army and to the whole world that, in order to retain his post, he was willing to comply with any orders, however unpalatable to him. But it was useless to remonstrate. The Queen would listen to no arguments. His friends, eager to compose a quarrel which they imagined might produce dire effects, strongly urged him to give way. He at length signified his approval of Masham's promotion, and was in hopes that her Majesty would be contented with this concession. But Anne and her supporters now understood but too well the stuff of which that mighty soldier, who was the terror of France, was composed. They had no longer any fear that he would throw up the service of an ungrateful Queen, and leave his cause to the judgment of his countrymen. The promotion of Hill was insisted on, and Marlborough, after a sharp struggle with his feelings, submitted also upon this point. He soon received from his infuriated wife a letter of reproaches which were perhaps not altogether undeserved. He might truckle, if he pleased, to the Queen and her bedchamber woman, but come what might no one should ever accuse her of similar weakness.*

But a matter still more serious was pressing upon Marlborough's spirits during the siege of Douai. The Queen, he heard, was bent in her blindness upon a project in which he foresaw the ruin of every hope, patriotic or selfish, he had formed. Shrewsbury's bland professions of friendship and asseverations that no further changes were in contemplation by the Tory conclave, had to a great extent allayed the fears which Godolphin at first entertained that the dismissal of Kent would be the first of a series of dismissals. But Shrewsbury, while declaring that the Whigs in general had nothing to apprehend, had always made a reservation as to one member of the Administration. He frankly acknowledged that her Majesty bore no love to Lord Sunderland, and that dread of Marlborough's resentment was all that retained him in office. How the great Captain-General would take the dismissal of his son-in-law was a problem which appears to have been anxiously

* Coxe's Memoirs.

discussed in the Queen's private circle for upwards of six weeks. Would such an affront be more than even he could endure? Would he resign in a flame, or would his avarice get the better of his feelings, and would he pocket the indignity and continue to cling to his salaries? Godolphin was frequently sounded upon the subject. His opinion was requested by several Tories as to what successor to the Secretaryship would be least disagreeable to his friend; but the stolid countenance of the Treasurer, and his affected ignorance of what his friend might think, sent the inquirers away completely baffled in their object. He, however, kept Marlborough apprised of all that was passing. He advised him to write to Shrewsbury, who, he thought, possessed considerable influence, and represent to him the alarm which Sunderland's dismissal would occasion among the Allied powers, for it would certainly be regarded as the harbinger of an entire change in the Government. Meanwhile the other Whigs in the Administration were standing aloof, and seemed to be utterly indifferent to the fate of their colleague, except in so far as it might provoke Marlborough to action. The apprehension that this indispensable chieftain might be irritated to the point of throwing up his command so greatly disturbed Somers that he wrote to the Duke, and conjured him to retain it at least until the end of the campaign. While Anne and her conclave were still deliberating whether it would be safe to launch their fiat against Sunderland, Godolphin received a letter which he hastened to read to her Majesty.

It was written by Marlborough to his friend in that pathetic but dignified language, of which he was so consummate a master. "You," he said, "are my best witness with what zeal, duty, and tenderness I have for these many years served the Queen. Notwithstanding the mortifications I have experienced I had resolved to bear everything, so far as with honour I could, in order to finish this war with the success and glory with which it has hitherto been conducted. This consideration made me consent to the Queen's desire of making generals of Mr. Masham and Mr. Hill, although neither of them had just pretensions to such promotion. That Lord Sunderland should be disagreeable to her Majesty grieves me; but his being

singled out at this time for dismissal can be for no other reason than because he is my son-in-law. My enemies have procured this to be done to make it impossible for me, with honour, to continue at the head of this glorious army. I conjure you to use such powerful instances to the Queen that she may be sensible, before it is too late, that the request I now make is dictated more by a regard for her good, and that of the public, than by any selfish considerations. What I desire is that she would be pleased to defer the removal of Lord Sunderland until the end of this campaign. She will then have the winter before her to take measures with the Allies for the command of this army, on which, in a great measure, depends not only the welfare of England, but of all Europe. I beg this as a reward for all my faithful services. If it must be otherwise, if nothing but my immediate retiring will content those who are now in power, I must submit, with the satisfaction that every one will be sensible that I was ready to serve if I could have done so with honour; and I desire that you will keep this letter for my justification after my death."*

Anne listened with placid composure to this melodious intercession from her greatest subject. A few years back a threat of resignation from Marlborough would have frightened her out of her senses; but her mind was now made up very comfortably to herself that resignation was the last step to be apprehended from him. The awe in which she had hitherto stood of this indispensable servant had very much abated during the last few months. He had submitted so quietly to the trick put upon him by Lord Rivers, he had given way so easily in the matter of promoting Hill and Masham, that it was now perfectly safe to offer him a still greater provocation. Upon the whole her Majesty appears to have felt a sense of relief at the humble tone adopted by him. Shrewsbury, the sleek traitor to whom the distracted Treasurer hurried with prayers for assistance, could scarcely suppress his wonder, upon reading the epistle, that the omnipotent Captain-General should put up so tamely with such an affront as the dismissal of his son-in-law from the Secretaryship. But Somers, to whom Godolphin resorted next, was in great alarm. As far as Sunderland only

* Marlborough to Godolphin, June 30, July 11.

was concerned, he cared not whether he were retained or discharged; but he imagined that his dismissal would be to Marlborough an affront greater than flesh and blood could endure, and that his threat of resigning would be executed. All the Whig leaders were of the same mind. They assembled at the house of the Duke of Devonshire, and drew up a letter to the Commander-in-Chief, conjuring him by the glory he had already obtained, by the many services he had rendered his sovereign and country, by the expectations he had raised in Europe, by all who were dear to him at home, who rested their chief dependence upon his success, not to quit the service at such a time. His continuance at the head of the army was, they declared, the only means to prevent the dissolution of Parliament. His retirement would afford the greatest satisfaction to his enemies.*

Upon the very morning, the 14th of June, when this letter was written, Boyle was sent by the Queen to demand the seals from his colleague Sunderland. The demand was, however, made in gracious language. Her Majesty was pleased to inform the Earl that she had no complaint to make of his official conduct, and wished to show her sense of his services by bestowing upon him a pension of three thousand a year. Sunderland, whose moral character was the reverse of that of his supple, venal, avaricious father, replied, with Spartan haughtiness, that he was glad to hear that the Queen was satisfied he had done his duty. "But if," he added, "I am not to have the honour of serving my country, I will not plunder it."† The seals were at once bestowed upon Lord Dartmouth, the son of that Admiral upon whose loyalty James II. had principally reckoned for the defeat of William's expedition, and the son-in-law of Nottingham. He had been, no doubt, recommended to Anne by the secret cabal, whose choice must in this instance have been guided by a desire of deferring, as far as possible, to the feelings of the Whigs. For Dartmouth, although a Tory, and suspected, not without reason, of being inclined to a restoration of the exiled family, was a good-humoured and accomplished nobleman, who, having hitherto taken but

* This letter is printed in the Conduct of the Duchess.

† Boyer; Oldmixon.

small share in the factious disputes of the time, had made no enemies.

Godolphin hastened to despatch the mortifying intelligence to his friend. Three days after the surrender of Douai, Marlborough learned that the favour for which he had begged so earnestly had been refused, and that his son-in-law had been dismissed from the Administration. He submitted to the affront with quiet resignation. "I am not conscious," he replied to Godolphin, "of having ever committed any fault against the Queen; but I fear that I have committed many against God, and if mortifications endured in this world may atone for these, I ought cheerfully to bear them." Before the entreaties of the Whigs that he would not lay down his command had come to hand, he had already decided that "no usage of Lord Sunderland or of myself should be considered when the welfare of the Queen and of all Europe is in question." He was determined to go on with the campaign, which would probably be his last, although every post from England should bring him such news as would make him wish himself a hermit.*

No amount of entreaties was indeed spared to confirm him in this resolution. The eyes of foreign diplomatists had long been fixed with disquietude upon the movements of that small party of politicians which had evidently insinuated itself into the favour and confidence of the Queen, and which rumour asserted to be meditating some sweeping changes in the Administration of the country. The apprehension seems to have been very general among the statesmen and crowned heads of the Continent that under no other Ministry except the existing one was it probable that England would be kept steady to the policy of conquering cities for one ally and a great empire for another. The announcement of Sunderland's dismissal spread consternation therefore through the length and breadth of Europe. Whether it originated solely from the sovereign's dislike to that Minister, or whether, as was commonly reported, it was to be regarded as the commencement of an entirely new policy under which the Government would be remodelled, and a fresh set of Ministers installed in authority who were drawn from the ranks of that party which had throughout shown its disapprobation of the

* Marlborough to Godolphin, June 30, July 11; June 29, July 10.

war, were questions anxiously discussed in every cabinet from the Hague to Vienna. In truth, foreigners were better informed of the intrigues which were being carried on in London and of the partialities and dislikes of the Queen than the Londoners themselves. That Anne was constrained to be the mouthpiece and to utter the sentiments of a party whose principles she hated, that the Whiggish Duchess of Marlborough had lost all influence over her, that Harley, the leader of the Tories, was constantly smuggled into her closet for the purpose of advising her Majesty in what manner she could escape from her captivity, were all matters in which continental politicians were well versed. But the first thought of every statesman was of the indispensable Captain-General. What would be the consequence if he, in a fit of vexation, should determine upon laying down his command? There could be little doubt that, if the troops were suddenly deprived of a leader so uniformly fortunate, they would be greatly disheartened, that the conviction would force itself on the minds of all men that England intended to secede from the Alliance. The spirits of the French would revive; in a couple of years they might retrieve all they had lost, and the next conferences might find them dictating instead of receiving the terms of peace. Eugene and Heinsius, both equally alarmed, hastened to offer their sympathies to Marlborough, and to assure him that their respective Powers would do anything in the way of remonstrating with her Majesty which he might think advisable. Joseph wrote to him with his own hand, begging him not to desert the cause, and enclosed a letter of advice and remonstrance which, if he considered it desirable, he might send on to the Queen. But Marlborough understood too well the temper of his countrymen to resort to a remedy of this nature. He knew that any intermeddling by foreigners in English affairs was much more likely to give offence than to do good; and his wisdom was soon apparent. The Imperial and Dutch envoys in London determined to try what their united intercession could accomplish. They requested an audience, and strove to make her Majesty sensible of the prejudice that was likely to ensue to the cause of the Alliance if she changed her Ministers, and especially her general. The answer they obtained was short, sullen, and

far from satisfactory. Anne had been of course apprised by her secret counsellors that any interference by foreign powers with her domestic concerns was unwarrantable and insolent. All that she would condescend to declare was that, whatever changes she might be pleased to make, the Duke of Marlborough would be continued in his employments. The secret counsellors, however, who certainly were now playing their part with much skill and prudence, thought it at the same time advisable to calm, as far as lay in their power, the apprehensions which seemed to prevail abroad. Boyle was instructed, in notifying Sunderland's dismissal to the English Ambassadors at the various Courts, to add the information that her Majesty did not contemplate making any further alterations in her Government.*

It was not only, however, at the Courts of the Allies that the conduct of the Queen was exciting interest. For some time past the divisions which appeared to exist between parties in England had attracted the attention of the Ministers of Louis. But the true position of affairs, the inclinations of the sovereign, the doctrines of rival factions, the objects of contending politicians in our island, were matters very imperfectly comprehended at Versailles. What little could be made out did not much raise the hopes of the peace-desiring King. The conclusion was that if Marlborough, who was regarded as pre-eminently the evil genius of France, thought his position insecure, more impediments than ever would be thrown in the way of a settlement.† The French plenipotentiaries still continued in their melancholy isolation at Gertruydenburg; but they could perceive no symptom on the part of their adversaries of any intention to moderate the intolerable harshness of their demands. On the contrary Buys and Vanderdussen rose, with every month that passed, to some fresh pitch of extravagance. So far from consenting to any modification of the proposal that his French Majesty should join the Allies in expelling his grandson from Spain, they now insisted that the work should be accomplished by him singly. It was their custom, after delivering themselves of long and angry speeches about the King's obstinacy, and frightening the Marshal and Abbé with

* Lamberty; Coxe's Memoirs. † Mémoires de Torcy.

dark hints of fresh sacrifices that would be demanded when the treaty for peace came to be settled, to return to the Hague, and publish that his Majesty was only trifling with them, that his design was to sow dissensions among the Allies, and to delude his own subjects into a belief that he was labouring to restore peace to them. After the lapse of several weeks they would return at the entreaties of the plenipotentiaries, and the same scene would be enacted over again. At length Uxelles and Polignac were empowered to make a fresh offer in substitution of the fourth article of the preliminaries. His Majesty could not accept, and would persist to the end in rejecting, the demand of his enemies that he should employ his troops against his grandson. But if the Allies chose to undertake a war for the recovery of Spain and the Indies he was willing to pay them a monthly subsidy towards their expenses. This expedient also was, after a little consideration, rejected upon the same grounds as the former suggestion that, until the Allies had driven out Philip, they should hold four French towns as a pledge of the King's neutrality. France, it was said, would be enjoying all the benefits of peace, while her adversaries would be exhausting themselves in an expensive and precarious war. An impartial judge might be of opinion that the peace which France would have enjoyed under the circumstances would scarcely have been that downy bed of repose which Buys and Vanderdussen imagined. She would have surrendered all her frontier towns into the hands of the Allies, who would be at liberty to resume their attacks upon a defenceless kingdom, if the work of recovering Spain did not go forward according to their wishes.

For nearly five months the French plenipotentiaries stood their ground manfully in this wearisome and humiliating struggle. They were unwilling to return without having accomplished anything. The Dutch, on their side, were just as unwilling to order them to quit the territories of the Republic. It had become the leading object of both parties to cast upon their adversaries the reproach of being the first to break off the conferences. But at length the patience of Louis was exhausted. He recalled his agents. They despatched a letter of angry remonstrance to the Grand Pensionary, and returned to France. The States-general, upon their part,

placed upon their journals an equally angry vindication of all their proceedings.

Meantime the Allied generals had been pushing their advantages with as much vigour as was possible in the face of an antagonist so skilful and alert as Villars. Arras had been their next object after the capture of Douai, but the investment of this city the Marshal, who was determined to bar the progress of the Allies towards the south, rendered almost impracticable by taking up a position close to it. Marlborough and Eugene were forced, therefore, to content themselves with sending a detachment to lay siege to Bethune, an inconsiderable town, but fortified with much care and science. One advantage it enjoyed, in common with many other towns in this flat region, was that by an ingenious system of sluices the country could be laid under water for some distance from its walls. The approaches in consequence were made by the Allies not without much difficulty and loss, while the garrison, stimulated by the hope of obtaining those munificent rewards which Louis was wisely accustomed to distribute among such officers and men as signalised themselves during a siege, was prepared to prolong its resistance to the uttermost. It was not until the thirty-seventh day after the trenches had been opened that the white flag was shown, and that Bethune, at a cost of life far exceeding the number of its inhabitants, became another item in the list of Allied conquests.

Villars, while the siege was proceeding, continued to execute a series of movements which greatly perplexed the Allied commanders. More than once Marlborough and Eugene, in the expectation that he was about to attack them, sent round in haste to collect their forces.* But the Frenchman, although he never ceased boasting of the mighty things he was about to accomplish, was too wise to attack an equal, possibly a superior, army posted behind entrenchments. He contented himself with providing for the safety of such important towns as

* In a letter to Godolphin, May 5—16, Marlborough says, "If we have a battle it must be the last; for it will be in all likelihood in a plain where there is neither tree nor hedge. I hope God will bless me with another opportunity of giving a mark of my zeal for the Queen and my country, and then I shall be less concerned at the behaviour I have received of late. A victory would have been of immense importance to him at this conjuncture.

Arras, Hesdin, and Cambrai, and with harassing the convoys and communications of his adversaries. So efficiently and adroitly was this last business performed that the Allied army began to suffer from a scarcity of provisions and water. As soon as Bethune fell the sieges of two other small fortresses, Aire and St. Venant, were undertaken simultaneously, as, owing to the position of the French army, no other road was open to the Allies except that towards the coast.

CHAPTER VII.

WHILE the Allied army was engaged in the sieges of these inconsiderable towns, events were occurring in England which had far more real bearing upon the prospects of the contending Powers. Upon the same day that Bethune surrendered Marlborough heard that his worst fears had been realized. His enemies had triumphed. Godolphin, his friend, his confidant, to whose assiduity he owed it that his soldiers had been always maintained in efficiency and comfort while the French were perishing from starvation and nakedness,—Godolphin had been turned out of the Ministry with almost as little ceremony as would be employed in discharging a drunken lackey.

It would be interesting to trace, if reliable information could be found for the purpose, the progress of that conspiracy which finally overturned a Government under whose auspices the country attained to a pitch of importance, relatively to other European powers, which it has never since exceeded. The actions of Harley during the two years which followed his resignation are involved in an obscurity which will never perhaps be entirely dispersed. That he was in the habit of conveying counsel to the Queen through the medium of his cousin, the bedchamber woman, was surmised by Godolphin and the Marlboroughs; and there were certainly many circumstances to corroborate that surmise. But proofs his accusers seem to have had none; nor is it probable that they possessed any. What passed between Harley and Mrs. Masham, between Mrs. Masham and the Queen, must for ever remain secret, inasmuch as none of the parties chose to make any revelations of their conversations. Nay, they all strenuously affirmed that the suspicions which their behaviour had excited were unfounded. Whether they spoke truth or were equivocating each student must determine

for himself, according as his own mind is more prone to believe in the depravity or the conscientiousness of human nature. It is possible that the Ministers, in attributing her Majesty's conduct to the advice of secret counsellors, a little underrated her ability to form an independent opinion.

The predilections of Anne for the Tories had been matter of common belief from the commencement of her reign. Harley had, during the four years he officiated as Secretary of State, enjoyed ample opportunities for studying her personal inclinations; and it was doubtless his habit of sympathizing with instead of remonstrating against her Tory partialities that drew down upon him the wrath of his colleagues. It is not likely that an ambitious and not over-scrupulous politician, who knew that his sovereign entertained a high opinion of his wisdom, and looked chiefly to him as her means of escaping from the control of a faction she detested, would have been content to wait until some accidental circumstance, such as the conclusion of the war, placed her at liberty to choose counsellors more congenial to her. But whatever connections Harley formed, whatever may have been the nature of his intrigues, he and his friends kept their counsel so well that the only evidence we possess, or are likely ever to possess, of such connections and intrigues, consists of the asseverations of his enemies. He must at first have seen his road to power barred by impediments apparently insurmountable. The Whigs commanded large majorities in both Houses of Parliament; nor was there any prospect that this state of things would be disturbed even in the Lower chamber. For the nation was in ecstasies at the success which had always attended the military operations, and might therefore be depended upon, when the time for a new election came, to support that party which had throughout insisted upon the necessity of the war, rather than a party which had, at the best, given to the war but a grudging and half-hearted consent, and whose leaders had ever been against commencing it. It was certain, moreover, that whatever influence the Allied Powers could bring to bear would be exerted on behalf of the Whigs. And what was to be done in the case of Marlborough? He was almost idolized by his countrymen. If anything should displease him he might resign, and by

letting the cause of his resignation transpire, would bring ruin upon those counsellors who had ventured to thwart him. It was evident that, while such conditions lasted, there could be little hope of delivering the Queen from the captivity in which she was held.

But the Sacheverell trial came, and all was immediately changed. The Ministers had rashly struck a sensitive chord in the national breast, and an explosion of religious feeling had been the consequence. Every peasant and small shopkeeper in the land was now convinced that a Whig was in politics a republican, and in religion an atheist, or still worse, a dissenter. In almost every pulpit the clergyman was inciting his congregation to a crusade against the enemies of Christ and the established Church. In half the towns of the kingdom mayors, sheriffs, and grand jurymen were getting up addresses to assure the Queen of their loyalty, and by means of guarded but significant phrases, of their Toryism. Yet notwithstanding these indications of what might be expected at a new election, Harley and his friends prudently determined to proceed with the utmost caution. The great danger to be apprehended was the resignation of Marlborough if any changes were made in the Government in his despite. The retirement in disgust of the favourite hero might bring the nation to its senses. People would be divided between their zeal for the Church and their appetite for winning battles and humiliating France, and the reputation of the Conqueror would be set up to compete with the reputation of the Saint for the suffrages of the electors.

Harley was by this time beyond any doubt enjoying the advantage of private colloquies with the Queen. While the trial of Sacheverell was proceeding he had been smuggled up the back-stairs of Kensington palace by Mrs. Masham. It was necessary for her Majesty to exercise great precaution, inasmuch as almost every servant about her owed his place to the recommendation of the Duchess, and probably reported to her Grace every extraordinary incident which came under his observation. Harley spoke at first in that enigmatical manner, which, however suggestive of his profound wisdom, was apt to leave those who sought his advice in doubt as to his meaning. He was entreated to deliver himself more clearly. One evening,

soon after the trial, a letter, bearing the marks of several dirty hands, was presented to him. The superscription was in the Queen's handwriting, and the letter appeared to have been given by her Majesty to Mrs. Masham, by that lady to an under-gardener, and by him to a common porter for conveyance to its destination.* From this period the politician's visits to the palace became more frequent. The principal cause of Anne's unhappiness he found to be the dislike she had conceived for Marlborough and his relations. Whatever notions she may once have entertained of the Whigs as a party, she now shrank from making an entire change in the spirit of her Government. Indeed, many of the leading Whigs had gained considerably on her esteem. But from that small family party which surrounded her with spies, and aspired to dictate all her actions, she was determined to deliver herself. Harley's feelings on these subjects were entirely in accordance with the Queen's. He was no uncompromising Tory. He had none of that fanatical hatred of the Whigs which burned in the breasts of such men as Rochester. His own wish was to pursue what he called a moderating scheme, to affect a happy combination of the best-tempered men of both parties. Against those who had formerly ejected him from office he naturally retained as much resentment as his nature was capable of feeling. In striking, however, at such men as Sunderland and Godolphin he saw the necessity of proceeding with extreme caution.† The resignation of Marlborough would throw everything into confusion. Any unseasonable alarm created in the minds of the Whigs might produce some motion in the Parliament, where they reigned supreme, which would compel her Majesty to desist from the project on which she had set her heart. In accordance with his advice Shrewsbury was introduced into the administration, and proved an adroit ally. He contrived to keep both Godolphin and the Whigs in good humour while the

* Swift's Memoirs relating to the change in the Queen's Ministry.

† In a letter from the Queen to Godolphin, June 14—25, the day after the seals were demanded from Sunderland, she refers to a threat of the joint resignation of Godolphin and Marlborough. "If he and you should do so wrong a thing at any time as desert my service, what confusion might happen might lie at your door, and you alone would be answerable and nobody else. But I hope you will both consider better of it." In another letter from Godolphin to Marlborough, July 12—23, he says, "The Lord Chamberlain (Shrewsbury) told Lord Halifax that the Queen was resolved to make me and Mr. Harley to agree."

temper of Marlborough was being sounded by a judicious scale of increasing insults. Anne herself condescended to perform a part in this play, and evinced no slight merits as an actress. At one time the Treasurer would be cheered by an apparent return of Mrs. Morley's old manner towards him; at another, Somers would be flattered by the eagerness his sovereign now showed to profit by his counsels. But at length the conspirators had seen enough to set their minds at ease. There was no longer any fear that Marlborough would resign, let his provocations be what they might. The favourable disposition of the nation towards the Tories had been ascertained in a manner such as removed all doubt from the breast of the least sanguine member of that party.

The feeling of the country had, in fact, been gauged by Sacheverell. The popularity of the Saint was still as great as ever in London. He could not appear in the streets without attracting a crowd, which followed him about with vociferous applause from house to house. The value of a man who was in himself a touchstone for ascertaining political opinions, did not escape the notice of the Tory leaders. Sacheverell had exercised his virtues sufficiently long upon the rabble of the metropolis, and it was desirable that a test should be applied to the provinces. Fortunately a decent pretext was not wanting for a journey. An enthusiastic High Churchman named Lloyd* had hastened to console the victim of oppression for his sufferings by the presentation of Selattyn, a Shropshire rectory on the border of Wales. Although Sacheverell's sentence precluded him from preaching for three years, it was determined that he should repair to his living for the ostensible purpose of taking possession. The route he was to pursue was accurately marked out. As soon as the particulars became known the Tory nobility and gentry bestirred themselves vigorously to do him honour; and it is possibly unfair to assume that their motive in encouraging the fanaticism of the people was political craft rather than honest bigotry. The first public reception of the Saint was at Oxford, the focus of High Church feeling, and surpassed in its enthusiasm the reception which in 1702 had

* He was a pupil of Sacheverell's and one of the members for Shropshire. Sacheverell to Swift, January 31, February 11, 1712.

been given to Anne. During the fortnight he remained in the city the heads of colleges vied with the noblemen in the vicinity and with each other in flattering and feasting the famous preacher who but a dozen years back had left them a humble and obscure clergyman. At Banbury the Mayor and Corporation in their official robes came to visit him at his inn, and made him a present of wine, perhaps in imitation of the *vin d'honneur* which it is customary in continental cities to offer distinguished guests. The bells were rung, and at night the town was in a blaze with bonfires and illuminations. A body of gentlemen on horseback escorted him into Warwick, where similar compliments were paid him; and from thence he passed from one nobleman's house to another's to Wrexham. His preferment lay about twenty miles from this town, and he went through the ceremony of reading himself in.

To repose in the comfortable retreat of Selattyn rectory while the public forgot him was, however, no part of the Saint's intentions. The authorities of Shrewsbury had entreated that their city might be honoured with the presence of the holy man, and Sacheverell lost no time in gratifying the devotional feelings of his admirers. All Shropshire thronged to its capital city to behold him. A few miles from the gates he was met by some of the notabilities of the county, and by a miscellaneous crowd on horseback, which was set down as numbering five thousand persons. At Bridgnorth and at Ludlow his reception was equally enthusiastic, the hedges for a distance of two miles from these towns being hung with garlands of flowers, while the church steeples were gay with countless flags. But as soon as he passed the boundary of Shropshire he found himself in another world. The people of Worcester were as eager as the people of Shrewsbury to see and adore the idol. But the authorities of the city were divided in their sympathies. The Sheriff and about one-half of the Common Councilmen were for High Church, and had set on foot a subscription for defraying the expenses of an entertainment to Sacheverell. The Mayor and a majority of the Aldermen were Whigs, and were determined to exert their authority. The Bishop, although so moderate a Whig that he had refrained from voting at the trial, had been nevertheless greatly scandalized by the subsequent conduct of Sache-

verell. He had sent round a circular to his clergy to prevent the bells of their churches from being rung, and the clergy, who seem to have been exceptions to the general body of their order, were disposed to obey the injunction. The mob, in great indignation at the supineness of their pastors, attempted to get into the churches, and some fighting ensued. But the constables were victorious, and the steeples sent forth no peals of joy when the martyr for passive obedience, mounted upon a white palfry, and preceded by flag-bearers, trumpeters, drummers, and fiddlers, approached the city. A scene of confusion ensued. The musicians of the Saint were collared at the gates, dragged into the presence of the magistrates, and charged with disorderly conduct. How it came to pass that the population did not rise at beholding such sacrilege must have been as inexplicable to Sacheverell as it is this day to ourselves. He had, however, the prudence to avoid doing anything at which the authorities could take offence, and as soon as possible took his departure from the unrighteous city.*

The visit to Worcester was a mistake. But the forgiving nature of the Saint still prompted him to accept the invitations of the truly pious in other parts of the country. For more than two months longer he wandered from town to town, generally blessed by the multitude and feasted by the magnates. When at length, in the latter part of September, he returned to London, the Tories might congratulate themselves that the country had been sounded to its depths. There could be no doubt that a majority of the gentry was in their favour, and that, when an election took place, they would everywhere have such a mob at their backs that a Whig who should dare to show himself at the hustings would be a bold man.

Long before his return, however, the secret advisers of the Queen, satisfied that they had nothing to apprehend from Marlborough, and that their success was certain in the event of a new Parliament being summoned, had made up their minds to action. It was determined to put an end to that monopoly of power which the Marlboroughs had so long enjoyed by dismissing Godolphin from the service. Either from a natural

* Boyer; Lettres Historiques; Luttrell's Brief Relation; Oldmixon.

love of deceiving or from the desire to avoid a scene with an old friend, Anne continued to the very last to dissemble her intentions. Upon the 7th of August she listened with her accustomed patience to a long remonstrance from her Treasurer about the impropriety of her permitting other counsellors than her acknowledged Ministers to talk to her upon business. To a question whether it was her will that he should continue to serve her, she replied in the affirmative.* The next day a footman in the royal livery left with the Earl's porter a note from her Majesty ordering him to break his staff.

Such was the fall of Godolphin, who contributed in no slight degree to what are termed the glories of this reign. To any high intellectual qualities he could make no pretence, and the caution for which he was celebrated amounted to timidity. But his reputation for integrity and the punctuality with which he met all the engagements of the Treasury, proved a mine of gold which supplied Marlborough with the means of extending his successes from Ostend to the Danube. His best eulogium lies in the fact that, at a time when capitalists looked more to the individual characters of the Ministers than to the honour of sovereigns and Parliaments, the confidence he inspired was such that money could always be raised upon easy terms. From the moment rumours became prevalent in the city of his being out of favour stocks of all descriptions declined in price. The dismissal of Sunderland produced a panic from the mere apprehension that the dismissal of Godolphin would follow. The Directors of the Bank, greatly alarmed by these rumours, applied for an audience, and represented to her Majesty the injury that would befall the credit of her Government if she carried into execution those designs which were generally attributed to her. The reply of Anne, if dictated by her Tory counsellors, would show that the commercial ideas of the latter were in some confusion. She had not yet determined, she said, to make any changes in her Ministry; but if she did make

* Godolphin to Marlborough, August 7—18; note from the Queen of same date. The statement that this note was left by an ordinary servant in the royal livery rests upon the authority of the Duchess. Lord Dartmouth, in a note to Burnet's History, says that Mr. Smith, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was the bearer; Boyer and Oldmixon that it was the Duke of Somerset. Swift, a very well-informed person, bears out the Duchess in saying that the note was sent through a very ordinary messenger.

any, she would take care that the public credit should not suffer.* The Directors retired, at a loss to imagine by what ingenious statesmanship her Majesty would contrive to transfer the confidence which was felt in her present Ministers to a new set of servants.

Upon the day when Godolphin's dismissal became known the commotion in Change Alley was tremendous. Few city men doubted that the next step would be that the Parliament would be dissolved. Having regard to the state of public feeling it was but too probable that the next House of Commons would be composed chiefly of those fox-hunting squires whose political creed consisted of little else than a hatred of Dissenters, standing armies, and stock-jobbers. To the leaders of such a party, to men suspected of an inclination to subvert the new settlement of the Crown, would be confided the management of the fleets and armies and the control of the finances. A wild panic set in. The shares of the Bank fell at once from a hundred and forty to a hundred and ten, and still the depreciation continued, foreign holders being among the most alarmed and eager sellers. The next *Gazette* contained the names of five persons whom her Majesty had appointed to act as Commissioners of the Treasury. One of the Commissioners was Harley. The selection had, however, been made with a degree of prudence which had been scarcely expected. The list included not one who was noted for extreme opinions. It consisted, in truth, of men so moderate in their principles that Godolphin drew some comfort from the reflection that it would be certain to disgust the main body of the triumphant faction.†

The first object to which the Commissioners applied themselves was to allay the apprehensions that prevailed in the city. That at a time when the support of the monied men was absolutely essential to the Government, the monied men should take it into their heads that Godolphin and a Whig ministry were essential to their security, was no slight embarrassment to a Tory administration at the outset of its career. Among the politicians of this party, the opinion was common that the war had not only been commenced, but was now being wilfully pro-

* Boyer; Lettres Historiques.
† Godolphin to Marlborough, August 8—19.

longed to suit the interests of individuals.* But a considerable time must at all events elapse before it could be terminated with any regard to decency; and, in the meanwhile, unless capitalists would extend to the new Government the confidence they had reposed in the old, some disasters would infallibly ensue, and those disasters would be laid by an indiscriminating public at the door of the Administration. The Commissioners sent therefore to desire a conference with the Directors of the Bank. Sir Gilbert Heathcote and his colleagues were assured that all the engagements contracted by the late Treasurer should be punctually discharged. Her Majesty, it was stated, had been much surprised and grieved to hear that some necessary changes she had thought fit to make in her Ministers had excited alarm. There was no cause for such a state of feeling. The present Commissioners of the Treasury would make it their chief business to support the credit of the Bank. They hoped that, in return, the Bank would continue to confer the same services upon the Government as heretofore. It soon appeared that Harley and his brethren had a little overrated the effect which these gracious assurances would have upon the cool heads of those to whom they were addressed. Two days afterwards, the Commissioners requested a loan of four hundred thousand pounds. It was refused. Matters in the city had gone from bad to worse. Bank shares had now declined to a hundred and six, and East India and other stocks had followed suit. The opinion had gained ground that the Parliament would be dissolved; and men looked gloomily upon the legislation which might be expected from its successor.†

So bad indeed did the financial prospects of the Government appear, that the Whigs were sanguine that the Commissioners could not maintain their places for a single month. The leading members of this party, with the exception of Wharton, who was at his post in Ireland, and Cowper, who was in the country, had held a meeting immediately after the dismissal of Godolphin. Their unanimous opinion was that, if Marlborough only continued to have the same success as in previous years,

* In Harley's Scheme of Government of 31st October, 1710, in the Hardwicke Papers, he says, "It must be understood that the Queen is restored to her power."

† Lettres Historiques; Boyer.

and would act in concert with them, things must infallibly come right again. It was thought indeed that a dissolution of the Parliament was in contemplation; but it was conceived also that their position would not be materially affected by an appeal to the country. There had certainly been outbursts of feeling in some parts of the country; but those outbreaks had been excited by persons who were notoriously their enemies. There was, they thought, no reason to apprehend that the great bulk of electors was alienated from the party which had supported the war with such earnestness and success. Sunderland, in especial, was in high spirits. "By all the accounts we have yet from the country," he wrote to his father-in-law, "there is no reason to fear but we shall have a good Parliament."*

Meanwhile, the great man, towards whom were turned the eyes of so many scheming politicians, was quietly labouring to secure his position against the malice of his enemies. His very first care, upon hearing of Godolphin's dismissal, was to draw closer his relations with the Elector of Hanover. George had always behaved towards Marlborough with an apparent friendliness which the hero seems to have rated at more than its just value, for subsequent events furnished ample proof that the vain Elector never forgot that, when the campaign of 1708 was planned, he had been treated as a babbler or a blockhead, to whom it was not expedient to impart a secret. Marlborough, however, never omitted an opportunity of conveying to his sovereign in prospect assurances of his attachment and zeal for his cause, and the Elector replied with letters and messages which the receiver might be justified in considering as indicative of a warmer feeling for him than common civility. The conception that he was a favourite at the Court of Hanover was at this season a source of great comfort to the baited Commander-in-Chief. He was now anxious to inoculate his Highness with some of his own bitterness against that faction which was so evidently conspiring for his downfall. He wrote to him, deploring the injury which had been inflicted upon the public credit of the English Government by the artifices of Harley and others. Their behaviour, he declared, could leave no doubt of

* Sunderland to Marlborough, August 24, September 4.

their intentions to bring back the Pretender; but his Highness might be assured that he and his friends would labour unremittingly to insure the Hanoverian succession. The Elector returned his thanks for the professions of attachment with which this letter was filled, and concluded by expressing a hope that nothing would at all events induce her Majesty to take the command of her armies from a general who had acquitted himself with so much glory and success.*

But Marlborough, while paying court to the Elector of Hanover, did not think it prudent to neglect entirely his interests in another quarter. It was not easy for a politician of those days to form any reliable estimate of the feelings of Englishmen as regarded the succession. The Whigs, in their eagerness to damage their opponents, accused every Tory indiscriminately of being in favour of Popery, France, and the Pretender. The ill-advised chivalry of Louis in acknowledging as King of England a person whom the people of England had deliberately rejected for their sovereign, had doubtless done more injury to the cause he upheld than could have been effected by the legislation of many Parliaments. The spectacle of an innocent and helpless youth, descended from a long line of princes, but fated to atone for the follies of his father by a lifetime of cheerless wandering about Europe, would have powerfully appealed to the compassion, the sense of justice, and the sense of loyalty of the English nation. But the same youth, decorated with the title of King of England by the very monarch of whose power Englishmen were most jealous, and furnished from time to time by that monarch with soldiers and fleets to recover his dominions by force, was a standing insult to those notions of liberty and independence which have never been absent from this island. In most minds, in truth, the cause of the Pretender had become associated with submission to France. His restoration to the throne was plainly impossible without involving an admission that Englishmen had acted hastily and unjustly, that Louis had in his superior wisdom pointed out to them what was their duty, and that to him was owing a debt of gratitude for the generous protection

* Marlborough to the Elector, August 30; the Elector to Marlborough, September 8, in the Macpherson Papers.

he had afforded to the object of their momentary indignation. But although these considerations were common and too obvious to escape any understanding, there were many persons from whose minds no mere patriotic feelings could obliterate those notions of the divine right of an hereditary king which had been the growth of centuries. The doubts which had once been universal as to the Prince of Wales being the child of James and Mary of Modena had been long since abandoned; and it must therefore have been difficult for a scrupulous individual, who piously believed that non-resistance was imposed as an obligation upon all Christians, to reconcile to his conscience the forcible transference of the sceptre of his rightful sovereign to a stranger.

It is probable that to a Whig the chances of a counter-revolution always appeared far greater than to a Tory. In his zeal for the Act of Settlement a Whig was prone to believe that every person, who was not on all points a Whig, could not be heartily and sincerely for the Protestant succession. A moderate Tory, on the other hand, who, without making a constant parade of his attachment to the principles of the Revolution, was on the whole contented with them, was apt to judge of the feelings of others by his own. Yet, in truth, the chances that James, and not a member of the Hanoverian family would succeed upon the demise of Anne, must have appeared formidable to any person capable of forming a calm opinion. The Highlanders of Scotland, the Catholic kerns of Ireland might be regarded as Jacobites to a man. In many rural districts of England the squires stuck to the rightful king as to a tenet of religion, not indeed with sufficient ardour of purpose to hazard their lives and estates on his behalf, but with feelings that would infallibly incline them to declare in James's favour should James be ever in a position to dispute the crown with much hope of success. The King of France would lend his aid to promote a counter-revolution. And what did those changes which her Majesty was now making in the Administration import? What was the significance of that fervid clamour for passive obedience and hereditary right which had been excited throughout the country? Were not these the signs that a widely-ramified conspiracy existed to restore the Pretender, and

that in a short time the exile would be summoned back to his patrimony and call his servants to account?

To neglect all provision for such a contingency Marlborough perhaps thought unworthy of a prudent man. Through the medium of his nephew Berwick he despatched to the exiled family assurances of his continued fidelity and devotion to their cause. The message must have been couched in warm terms if we are to judge of it by the profusion of gratitude it elicited from James and his mother. They implored Marlborough not to give up a situation in which it was in his power to render them the greatest service.* It is possible, however, that the willingness of the poor exiles to believe in the sincerity of a man so important to their cause may have led to their putting upon words merely complimentary a construction such as would not have been put by cooler judges. What is quite certain is, that Marlborough meant nothing by his professions in this quarter. His hopes were fixed as ardently as those of any Whig upon the succession of the Electoral family; and while for the Stuarts he had nothing but kind messages, for the Hanoverians he was willing to employ his whole influence, and even, if need were, his money.

Harley had now accomplished nearly all that he had set himself to do. Sunderland and Godolphin, the objects of her Majesty's personal dislike, had been pulled down. Marlborough, the great monopolist of power and patronage, had been effectually humbled, and had submitted to his degradation with a meekness such as rendered his future compliance with the will of a new set of masters probable enough. The Administration had been remodelled by the infusion of a few moderate Tories. With these triumphs he was content. It was no desire of his that men like Somers, Cowper, and Walpole should be exchanged for extreme men such as Rochester and Nottingham. If the Whigs would only abate a little of that arrogance which stood in the way of closing a war which otherwise promised to be interminable, the Government, as it now stood, would answer all his views.† But the attitude which the Whigs persisted in

* The Queen (Mary of Modena) to Gurney (Marlborough), July, 1710; Macpherson Papers.

† Harley's moderating scheme was from the first denounced by the Tories. In Swift's Change of the Queen's Ministry is this passage: "The cause of their

maintaining, convinced him at length of the utter impracticability of his original scheme of a mixed administration. The possibility of a Tory Government supporting itself for any time in power, they scouted almost with derision. Such a Government, they persisted in thinking, could depend upon nothing but the ill-advised partiality of the sovereign. It could not obtain credit for money enough to keep the armies in the field for a month. The Parliament might be dissolved and a new one summoned. But in that prospect there was little cause for uneasiness. The clamour of Sacheverell's voteless rabbles could not, when it came to an election, weigh a feather in the scale.

Harley, who had imagined that the Whigs were as anxious to retain their places as he himself was to get into power, was greatly disappointed by their refusal to coalesce with him. Nothing remained now but to form a new Government out of the Tory party, and to appeal to the country to support that Government. Anne appears to have been as much annoyed as her favourite counsellor to find that she could pursue no middle course. She dreaded to commit herself into the hands of an entirely new set of servants and to be made the mouthpiece of doctrines in ludicrous contrast to those which she had been uttering for several years past. But there was clearly no alternative for her. To retain such a House of Commons as was now in existence would be folly. The new Administration would be thwarted and embarrassed at every turn. She made up her mind therefore to dissolve the Parliament. Montague, the Attorney-General, was dismissed. Harcourt was immediately installed in his office, and was instructed to draw up the necessary proclamation. At a meeting of the Privy Council upon the 19th of September, Anne called upon him to read it aloud. Most of the Whigs, who were present, were surprised and confounded. Cowper, who had received some intimation of what was coming, had prepared an elaborate remonstrance against the measure. The Queen stopped short his harangue.

complaint was that so great a number of the adverse party continued in employment, and some, particularly the Duke of Somerset and the Earl of Cholmondeley, in great stations at court. They could not believe Mr. Harley was in earnest, but that he designed to constitute a motley comprehensive Administration which, they said, the kingdom would never endure." See also a note of Speaker Onslow to Burnet.

She had considered the matter well, she said, and did not wish to hear any debate upon it. It was her pleasure that the writs should be issued immediately.*

And now the predominance of that party which had humbled to the dust the military power of France, came to an abrupt close. Two days after this council, Dartmouth, the new Secretary, was instructed to demand the Steward's staff from the Duke of Devonshire, who delivered it up with an uncontrollable burst of passion. To Somers, however, whose calm wisdom and gentle manners had gained even upon the narrow and prejudiced mind of Anne, a kind message was sent. Dartmouth was ordered to say that, although the Queen thought it necessary for her service that her uncle Rochester should be President of the Council in his place, his salary should be continued to him by way of pension. Her Majesty would also be glad if he visited her frequently.† Wharton now resigned the Lieutenancy of Ireland, Orford the Admiralty, Boyle and Walpole the Secretaryships of State and of War. Harley had spared no pains to induce Cowper to retain the Great Seal. Where to find a new Chancellor was a difficulty. There was indeed one Tory lawyer whose claims to that great office were unexceptionable. But Harcourt had just been made Attorney-General, and professed himself more desirous to remain in a position where he could earn as much money as he pleased, than to close his career as an advocate by accepting a post from which a revulsion of popular feeling might eject him in a few months. Cowper, on his part, was determined not to separate from his friends, and had moreover too much regard for his dignity to remain in an office from which he knew he would be dismissed as soon as the Tories were prepared with a successor. He repaired to the palace, and offered the seal to Anne, who again and again in great perplexity forced it back into his hands. He was at length prevailed upon to retain it for one day longer. On the morrow he returned to the Palace in the same resolution. Harley had, however, effected an arrangement with Harcourt during the interval. The seal was accepted, and confided temporarily to the custody of three commissioners.‡

* Burnet; Cowper's Diary; Campbell's Life of Cowper.
† Dartmouth's Note on Burnet. ‡ Cowper's Diary.

The posts left vacant by so many dismissals and resignations were speedily filled up. The office of Steward of the Household was given to John Sheffield, Duke of Buckinghamshire. He had been widely celebrated for nearly half a century for the qualities which constituted a fine gentleman of that age, courage signalised both in the field and on the waves, manners unusually graceful and polished, and wit which was sometimes employed in lamenting the cruelty of Celia and more frequently in holding up to ridicule the inconsistencies of the Christian religion. In spite, however, of vices and opinions which would shock the sobriety of a lady bred in a purer form of society, he had always been a great favourite with Anne, and the surmise is not unreasonable that, since the decline of the Marlboroughs in her esteem, his influence over her conduct had been considerable. In politics he was an extreme Tory. He had sat under James in the Court of High Commission, had been an advocate of the dispensing power, and had gone all lengths to ingratiate himself with the tyrant short of going through the formula of a conversion to the Church of Rome. There had been nothing in his subsequent conduct to show that he repented of the mean and wicked part he had acted before the Revolution. There is indeed strong evidence that he was one of those very few Englishmen who, for the sake of lucre, would not have scrupled to betray their country to France and a Popish sovereign.*

Rochester was made President of the Council, St. John was appointed Secretary of State; and George Granville, the descendant of an old Cavalier family, Secretary of War. The Admiralty was put in commission, with Sir John Leake at the head. Ormond succeeded Wharton as Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. Harcourt, after a little time, consented to sit on the woolsack as Lord Keeper; but still declined to be made a peer. At the end of a few days the only Whigs remaining in the household or the Administration were the three Dukes of Shrewsbury, Somerset, and Newcastle. Somerset vouchsafed to retain his post of Master of the Horse; but was in no good

* For the particulars of his career see the Biographia Britannica. Swift states that Buckinghamshire was the only person with whom he was acquainted who seemed really desirous of a restoration of the Stuarts.

humour at the turn events had taken. The changes which his own counsels to Anne had not been without effect in bringing about, had gone farther than he had ever contemplated. Marlborough, whose grandeur disagreeably overshadowed his own, he had been anxious to humiliate. But his opinions on most other points still coincided with those of the Whigs. He was now absurd enough to express his dislike of dissolving that Parliament whose first work upon reassembling would have been to extol Marlborough to the skies and bring impeachments against his enemies.* Newcastle, a nobleman of no great importance from an intellectual point of view, consented to retain the Privy Seal, and his compliance was rewarded with the lucrative appointment of Warden of the Forests beyond Trent.

A week after Anne had signified her intentions in Council the Parliament was dissolved. A new one was summoned by proclamation for the 25th of November. In the same *Gazette* appeared two other proclamations for public thanksgivings through England and Scotland on account of the wonderful successes of the campaign, and more particularly the signal and glorious victory achieved in Spain. The news of two successive triumphs over the forces of Philip had, in fact, reached London during the month of August; and the effect upon the perturbed minds of capitalists, combined with the intelligence of the fall of Bethune, had been surprising. The city, which had been all gloom and despair, became at once radiant with hope. Reports that the Parliament would not be dissolved and that the Whigs would remain in power were instantly in circulation. Stocks of every description rallied almost to the point from which they had fallen. In a fortnight, however, the city was again a prey to despondency. The Whigs were out and the Parliament was dissolved. Her Majesty, it seemed, was not to be diverted from revenging herself upon some of her servants merely because their efforts in the war had been crowned with success, and because a vigorous and influential ministry was especially necessary to the welfare of the country at the moment.

From the state of affairs in Spain at the commencement of

* Lord Hardwicke's Note on Burnet.

the year few persons would have augured that great events would ensue. Louis had withdrawn every battalion in his pay from the Peninsula, in the hope of convincing the Allies of his willingness to abandon the cause of his grandson; with the real object, as the Allies angrily maintained, of enabling himself to declare, with some appearance of truth, that it was out of his power to deliver up Spain into their hands. The consequence was, however, that Philip's army, with the exception of two or three regiments formed of French deserters and some Walloons who had been withdrawn from Flanders, was now composed of the wretched material of the country. It was a crowd without discipline, and officered by men who, although veterans in the business of court intrigues, were, as a rule, mere novices in the art of war. Such requisites as magazines and artillery were, as usual, almost entirely wanting. At the head, however, of the motley, ragged, half-famished assemblage, numbering perhaps twenty-six thousand men, had been placed the Marquis of Villadarias, the same commander whose energetic and skilful measures had chiefly conduced to the failure of Rooke and Ormond at Cadiz. Philip himself, moreover, had been roused from the state of listlessness in which he spent his days, and prevailed upon to animate his troops by his presence.

Little, however, as was to be expected from the operations of this multitude the affairs of the Allies seemed even less promising. In May, when Philip took the field, the British, Dutch, Imperial and native troops stationed in Catalonia did not together exceed sixteen thousand men. But from Italy were expected five thousand Germans, and towards the close of the month Stanhope, who had been collecting recruits, arrived at Barcelona with about one thousand. Matters at the court of Charles had gone exceedingly wrong during the absence of the Englishman whose firmness and energy had kept in some restraint the quarrelsome flock of counsellors which encompassed his Majesty. The Prince of Darmstadt and Staremberg had with difficulty been prevented from attempting each other's lives in a duel.* But order was now

* Lettres Historiques. Charles settled the dispute by paying a sum of money to the Prince, who thereupon took his departure.

restored. Charles was induced to follow the example of his rival by appearing at the head of the troops, and with his two generals, Stanhope and Staremberg, marched in the beginning of June against the enemy, who seemed to be meditating an invasion of Catalonia.

For nearly two months the hostile armies continued to execute various manœuvres without coming to an engagement, Philip sending his foragers far into Catalonia, and the Allies retorting by entering Aragon and endeavouring to excite an insurrection there. Villadarias, who was at first greatly the superior in numbers, was anxious for a battle; but Stanhope and Staremberg took up a strong position near Balaguer, from which they would not be enticed, and which could not be approached without great danger to an assailing party. But at length the Allied army received its expected reinforcements, and the English general, finding himself now almost on a par with his antagonist, and encouraged by the excellent condition of his troops, a large proportion of which were British, was for seeking out and fighting the enemy. Staremberg, whose blood ran more methodically in his veins, differed from the opinion of his colleague. A defeat, he argued, would lead to the entire overthrow of the Allied power in the Peninsula, and he could not recognise the wisdom of setting Charles's crown upon the hazard of a single battle. A council of war was summoned. A majority of the officers was in favour of the vigorous policy recommended by Stanhope; but the resolutions of the council were of little avail, as the King had become a convert to Staremberg's maxims. It was not until after a good deal of angry remonstrance that Stanhope prevailed upon his Majesty to allow his troops to advance so as to intercept a march which the enemy seemed bent on executing.* He himself then set out in advance with a party of cavalry, reached the small town of Alfaraz early on the morning of the 27th of July, and threw bridges over the Noguera for the passage of the main body. A few hours afterwards he perceived the advance guard of the enemy moving directly towards him. He made no doubt that his own small force would be attacked; but to his surprise the enemy came to a halt when at Almenara, about two miles

* Stanhope to Sunderland, July 23, in Mahon's History.

lower down the river, and there remained. By six in the evening the entire force of Charles had crossed at Alfaraz, and the entire force of Philip had reached Almenara, so that the two armies now confronted each other. Staremberg was still averse to an engagement. But the spirits of the English regiments had been raised to fever point by the sight of the enemy, and they were giving vent to their feelings in loud cries of "shame" at the inaction of their commanders. Stanhope could not control his vexation at what he considered the dawdling ways and habits of irresolution which characterised the Germans. There were but two hours more of daylight; and if the night fell the probability was that the enemy would disappear before morning. Under these circumstances he spoke to the King in language little sanctioned by the usage of courts, and succeeded at length in obtaining permission to dislodge a few Spanish squadrons which had pushed themselves forward as if in bravado towards the Allies. Of this permission he availed himself to bring into action all the cavalry of the army. Having addressed a brief but energetic oration to the soldiers of his country, he charged at the head of the English, Dutch, and Palatine regiments which formed the first line. The hostile horse spurred gallantly forward to meet the charge, and a fierce combat began. The Allied squadrons on the right had easy work in routing the left wing of the enemy. But opposed to the English and Dutch was the splendid bodyguard of Philip, regiments of picked soldiers not inferior in courage or discipline to the renowned household troops of the French king. In that furious fray officers and privates soon got mixed up, and fought without distinction. Stanhope himself seemed animated by the spirit of a crusader. A Spaniard, whose decorations betokened high rank, was seen to fall beneath his sword. Many saddles of the English troopers were, however, emptied by the galling fire from a regiment of Spanish foot, which had stolen unnoticed upon the Allied flank. It was not until more than four hundred men had fallen that the enemy began to give way. The ranks of the French and Spanish, under the effect of repeated charges, soon fell into disorder, and flight became general. Fortunately for them, and for Philip himself, whose august person was in some

danger, the daylight was beginning to fail. Under cover of a night which proved intensely dark, horse and foot made off in the wildest confusion in the direction of Lerida.*

Had Charles taken advantage of his victory and pushed on with the returning light, there can be little doubt but that the weak fortifications of Lerida would have proved a very inadequate protection to an army crestfallen and in complete disorganization. But Staremberg now persuaded him to revert to that cautious system of warfare from which he had been forced for a moment by the impetuosity of his English Allies, and a fortnight was consumed in making himself master of some petty towns in Aragon. Meanwhile the army of his rival, which had not greatly suffered in numbers, was recovering from its state of panic, and found itself reinforced by the garrisons of various strongholds, which had been sent for in all haste. Provisions beginning to fail in Lerida, Philip determined to fall back on Saragossa. Then at last Charles was prevailed upon to permit his troops to march in pursuit of his rival. Stanhope, who had been chafing with impatience at the sight of his men wasting their valour on paltry sieges, and suffering from scarcity of food and drink when conquest and plenty were before them, was again all ardour. He crossed the Ebro with his cavalry, came up with the rear-guard of the enemy at Penalva, defeated them after a tough contest, and sent them flying along the road to Saragossa. Three hours later Charles came up with his active lieutenant, and ate the dinner which had been prepared for Philip. Upon the morning of the 19th of August the Allies were again in sight of the whole Spanish army drawn up before Saragossa, with the Ebro on their left, a range of hills upon their right, and along their front a deep ravine. It was plainly impossible to attack them except at great risk. But the impetuosity of Stanhope had hurried Charles into a position from which there could be no retiring without incurring the reproach of cowardice. It was decided, after the usual amount of irresolution and misgiving, to stake the cause upon the

* Boyer; Lettres Historiques; Lamberty. Each of these authorities furnishes two accounts of the battle, a letter from the Dutch commander to the States-general, and a letter from the Savoyard envoy, who was with the army of Charles. I have also availed myself of Lord Mahon's work, relying on its being founded on the testimony of Stanhope's letters.

event of a single battle, and preparations for the attack were made during the night.

Daylight had scarcely broken upon the morning of the 20th when the cannon was playing on both sides. Many changes were made by the Allied commanders in the disposition of their troops upon reconnoitring the arrangements of the enemy. The Spaniards were rather stronger in cavalry, and had massed nearly the whole of it upon their right wing, a circumstance which determined Stanhope to eke out his deficiency in this respect by interspersing among his own cavalry some battalions of foot. Little was seen of the two royal youths on whose behalf fifty thousand men were about to imbrue their hands in each other's blood. Charles rode down the line, but retired to a convent in the rear of his army when the battle was about to commence. Philip, whose sickly constitution had been upset by the rapidity of his flight from Penalva, yielded to the entreaties of his generals, and withdrew to some distance from the field. The commander-in-chief of his forces was now the Marquis de Bay, the same officer who had distinguished himself the preceding year by a victory over Galway and the Portuguese. Villadarias, whose strategy at Almenara seems to indicate that, although an excellent leader in irregular warfare, he was not quite fitted for the command of an army, had been removed.

By noon the Allies had completed their preparations, and the signal for onset was given. The whole line advanced. The left wing, in which the greater portion of the cavalry had been placed under the eye of Stanhope, was the first to engage. Some Portuguese squadrons stationed upon the extreme left, true to their almost invariable practice, made off at the first charge from the enemy, and were pursued with great ardour by the Spanish horse. But this partial defeat proved of immense service to the Allies. The English, Dutch, and Palatine regiments maintained their ground with great steadiness. The hostile cavalry, weakened by the numbers who had gone off in pursuit of the Portuguese, began to yield. Meanwhile, the advance of the infantry in the centre, and upon the right, had been attended with complete success. The Dutch commander, Belcastel, employed a manœuvre which at that time attracted

attention from its novelty, but which has since become an ordinary feature in warfare. At a few paces in front of the line marched, with intervals between them, some of the best shots of the regiment, who opened fire upon the enemy, while their comrades behind moved forward with their muskets over their shoulders and bayonets fixed. By this stratagem, apparently a rudimentary notion of the modern practice of skirmishing, the Spaniards were provoked to deliver their fire at a distance from which it could have little effect, and before they could reload the Dutch were upon them. They broke at the first charge, and scattered in all directions. In three hours the battle was over. Six thousand prisoners, cannon and colours innumerable, and the possession of Saragossa, were the trophies of victory. The cost was fifteen hundred of the brave fellows who had contributed to win it.*

Charles took up his quarters in Saragossa, the inhabitants of which city were well disposed towards him, while his generals were debating the course which it now behoved them to pursue. The debate, as usual, soon degenerated into a dispute. Stanhope, not unnaturally elated by the two splendid victories which had accrued from following his counsels, would hear of nothing but marching to Madrid, and was in a high state of indignation that Staremberg, who had been a witness of the marvels which English valour and enterprise could achieve, should still remain obstinately prepossessed in favour of his plan of conquering the country by degrees, and commencing with those provinces which were best affected to the Allies. But the German commander was not to be moved by the eloquence of his colleague. The occupation of Madrid, he argued, would be the abandonment of all sound military rules for the sake of effect. There was great reason to suppose that the population of the Castiles were affectionately attached to Philip. If that Prince succeeded in raising fresh forces, the Allied army could not maintain itself long in a city without fortifications of any description; and if forced to retreat, whither was it to betake itself for refuge? The bare, sunburnt, wind-blown plains of the Castiles contained not one fortress which could be made defensible.

* There are several accounts of the battle of Saragossa in the Lettres Historiques; Boyer; Lamberty.

There was a sad probability that the army would perish of hunger and thirst before it could regain the friendly provinces on the coast. His advice was to march, in the first place, and disperse the remnant of Philip's forces, then to complete the reduction of Valencia, and to send such a detachment into Navarre as would effectually close the Peninsula against any reinforcement which might be despatched from France.

Not only the sequel of this campaign, but the opinions of competent military critics, leave us in no doubt of the wisdom of Staremberg's advice upon this occasion. The only effect of his arguments, however, seems to have been to inspire Stanhope with the suspicion that the cold and stupid German was jealous of his brilliant generalship, and wished to hinder him from adding to his laurels. Determined to carry out his plan, he assumed a high tone. His orders were, he said, to prosecute the war with vigour, and, unless this opportunity of putting his Majesty in possession of his capital were embraced, he and his English would retire, and leave the rest to conquer Spain how they could. To this argument it was impossible to reply. Stanhope wrote to Galway, who was still in command of a few battalions in Portugal, pressing him to do his utmost to join him, and, eight days after the battle, the Allied army was on its march to Madrid.*

In that capital all was dismay. Philip, after his defeat, had returned thither, leaving Bay to collect the remains of his army. Not a single regiment remained by him. Preparations for the flight of the royal family to Valladolid were at once commenced. Perhaps the greatest of the many touching proofs of the devotion of the Castilians to him was afforded upon this occasion. As soon as it became known that Philip was about to abandon his capital, the grandees, with scarcely an exception, hastened to the palace, and entreated permission to share the flight and misfortunes of their sovereign. Outside the building a mournful crowd collected to testify their sympathy, and were gratified by a sight of the Queen, who, holding the infant Prince of Asturias in her arms, appeared at a balcony and addressed to her subjects a few words of thanks. In twenty-four hours the

* I have taken this account of the differences between Staremberg and Stanhope chiefly from St. Simon.

royal coaches left Madrid, and were followed by the equipages of almost every person of distinction. One old bedridden nobleman, the Marquis of Mancera, who was said to have attained the age of one hundred years, persisted in being borne after the Court in a litter, and only consented upon the reiterated entreaties and even commands of Philip, to forego a journey which threatened to cost him his life.* It is to be regretted that no contemporary writer should have attempted to probe the sources of a loyalty which, at first sight, seems inexplicable. As a rule Castilians despised an alien, and detested a Frenchman: yet Philip was both. He was descended from a line of kings, the hereditary enemies of the Spanish race. His grandfather, who had placed him on the throne, had done more to pillage and oppress Spain than any French king before him. Nor had this listless, melancholy, feeble-minded young prince, any personal qualities likely to obliterate in the hearts of his subjects the remembrance of his origin. The English, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, submitted, to escape the calamity of a Popish sovereign, to the rule of three foreign princes; yet their submission was without love, and was, in truth, little better than an intelligent preference for the Protestant religion, the peace and prosperity of their country over the old rooted passion for hereditary right. But the Castilians, without any such respectable motives, yielded to Philip a degree of reverential love which amounted almost to adoration. The solution of the mystery may be as follows:—In the first place Philip had been duly proclaimed king, and it was the nature of the Castilians of that age to regard their kings with the same blind and unbounded awe as the pious Hindoos of this day regard cows, monkeys, and alligators. To what lengths their loyalty would go is strikingly illustrated by the fact that, under all the wretched misgovernment of the successors of Philip II., misgovernment which lasted a whole century, scarce a murmur was heard against the Court. They were contented to look on in mute resignation while their country grew poorer,

* Boyer; Lettres Historiques; Mariana; Mémoires de Noailles; St. Simon; Stanhope to Dartmouth, October 4. Stanhope attributes the circumstance that all the people of distinction followed Philip to fear and not to affection, and this opinion is supported by all the writers on the side of the Allies. But the voluntary signs of attachment made to Philip by the common people leave no doubt of the incorrectness of this supposition.

and sank to a lower depth of degradation with every year. They allowed themselves to be plundered by a set of scoundrels whose only title to respect was that they were the ministers of their lawful sovereign. The Portuguese revolted, the Catalans called in the French; but the Castilians remained as staunch as if their rulers were Antonines. Their affection for Philip was also heightened by the circumstance that two or three provinces were in favour of his rival. So great was the jealousy existing between the inhabitants of this divided country, that the mere fact that a Catalan or a Valencian had declared for Charles was a sufficient reason for a Castilian to repudiate him with horror. Lastly, although the orthodoxy of the Austrian might be as good as the Frenchman's, Charles was supported by foreigners, heretics, and Portuguese, who, should his cause prove triumphant, would probably remain to guard his throne, to contaminate the land by their presence, and bring down upon it the judgment of Providence.

Charles and his generals, whose experience of the inhabitants of the Peninsula had been hitherto limited to those of Aragon and Catalonia, and who had fallen into the common error of assuming that the Spaniards were one people, were quite unprepared for the wide difference of feeling between Saragossa and Madrid. A bitter disappointment awaited them, therefore, upon passing the borders of Castile. Charles's first measure was to publish a manifesto inviting such of his subjects as had taken up arms against him to come in and make their peace. Not a single person of eminence answered the summons. Stanhope, however, pushed on with his cavalry, was met a short distance from Madrid by the magistrates, who came to signify their submission, found no difficulty in taking military possession of the city, and fixed his camp in the suburbs. But the forlorn and deserted aspect of the once busy capital was a sight to sober the most sanguine conqueror. The citizens had sullenly closed their shops. The palaces of the grandees were all empty. Not a carriage was to be seen in the streets. Even the lower orders of the people seemed to have shut themselves up in their houses. Still more annoying to commanders who were greatly in need of money, was it to find that the Court and nobility had made so clean a removal of their valuables that, according to

the computation of an English resident, it would be difficult to discover five thousand pounds in the whole city. Charles was, however, formally proclaimed King, and Stanhope tried hard to get up a little demonstration in his favour when he made his public entry. To avoid irritating the people the soldiers were kept under strict discipline, a task which devolved no slight labour upon the officers, for the markets were so grudgingly supplied that it was not always easy to procure food for the army. An appeal was made to the Marquis of Mancera for his support; but the old gentleman, although he received Stanhope with politeness, steadily refused to acknowledge any other sovereign than Philip, and soon pleaded his age and infirmities as an excuse for retiring to bed. Upon the day when Charles entered Madrid the streets were thronged by a curious multitude, but the only voices raised to greet him were those of a few Austrian partisans who had just been released from prison, and of sundry beggars who had been hired to shout. He hastened to pay his devotions at the shrine of our Lady of Atocha, the favourite saint of the Madrilenians; but his piety, however acceptable it may have been in heaven, was unrewarded upon earth. So dark were the looks of the citizens that his officers dared not allow him to take up his abode in the magnificent palace of the kings of Spain; and, accordingly, deeply mortified and dejected, he repassed the gates of Madrid, and went to reside in a country house in the suburbs. It was necessary to guard him with the utmost care; for to so short a distance did the authority of the Allies extend that guerilla bands were constantly making their appearance even in the Prado.*

Meanwhile the affairs of Philip were fast recovering from the confusion into which they had fallen after the disasters of Almenara and Saragossa. The devotion of the people of Castile and Andalusia to their unfortunate monarch literally knew no bounds. Sums subscribed by the corporations of different towns kept pouring into Valladolid. But still more gratifying were the proofs of attachment almost daily received from the lowest and poorest members of the community. Small shopkeepers

* Lettres Historiques; San Felipe, Commentarios; Stanhope to Dartmouth, October 4. He says, "We are not masters in Castile of more ground than we encamp on."

and artizans were continually entreating to be admitted to the palace for the purpose of laying at the feet of the Queen the scanty savings of their industry. Less beautiful but perhaps more wonderful was the liberality of the great Spanish ecclesiastics. No less a sum than three hundred thousand crowns, contributed by the wealthy bishops of the southern provinces, reached Madrid, and was despatched after the Court just in time to escape the clutches of the Allies.* With such fervid and generous assistance magazines were not long in being established. Troops were summoned up from distant stations; a fresh train of artillery was procured from Badajoz; and at the end of a few weeks, while the Allies were still loitering in Madrid, Philip found himself once more at the head of an army. At this conjuncture an illustrious Frenchman arrived to take the command, who, although not entitled to rank in the very first order of generals, hideous in his person, brutal in his manners, and degraded by such filthy vices that his society was avoided by every respectable person, was, as compared with any officer in the Spanish service, a consummate master of the art of war.

Ever since the commencement of the year, Philip, convinced that a good commander was not to be found in Spain, had been entreating his grandfather to send him Vendôme. That personage, stung to the quick by the ill success of his arms in the Netherlands, caught eagerly at an opportunity for retrieving his reputation. Louis, so long as any chance remained of his plenipotentiaries at Gertruydenburg coming to an arrangement, rejected all solicitations on this head. But the rupture of the conferences having at length set him free to follow his inclinations, Vendôme was gratified with the requisite permission, and immediately set off for Spain. At Bayonne he received the news of the total rout of the Spanish army at Saragossa. He wrote at once in that sanguine and confident tone which every marshal assumed in addressing Louis, to assuage the alarm which this untoward event was certain to produce at Versailles. If the Duke of Noailles, he said, who was master of a small force in Rousillon, was put into condition to act, he would answer for effecting a speedy change in the face of affairs. Of the Spanish

* St. Simon; Mariana.

officers who had brought about the disaster he spoke in terms of unmeasured contempt. Their marches and manœuvres for eight days before the battle were, he asserted, nothing but a tissue of puerile blunders and absurdities. His greatest surprise, however, was to hear that the Allied generals had, instead of following up and dispersing the remains of the defeated army, betaken themselves, for no useful purpose he could imagine, to Madrid.

In proportion as this expected redeemer drew near Valladolid, the spirits of the panic-stricken Court rose. A few days before his arrival, Noailles, under orders from Louis, had been endeavouring to persuade the royal family to compound with the Allies by offering them Spain on condition of being permitted to retain a crown in Italy. But it was in vain that the envoy drew the gloomiest pictures of the disaffection which prevailed in some of the provinces, of the poverty of the exchequer, of the futility of depending upon Spanish troops, and of the small likelihood of any more reinforcements arriving from France. Philip and his high-spirited young queen were in arms at the proposal of abandoning Spain, and had an answer for every argument. It might be true that the affections of a portion of their subjects had been alienated from them; but most of the provinces had given the most convincing proofs of their fidelity. The Spanish troops had indeed been beaten; but this arose from their not having been sufficiently trained; and they had been moreover unfortunate in their commanders. The army had now been reorganized; the soldiers were being carefully taught their duty, and a competent general was coming to lead them to victory. The enemy had committed the singular blunder of abandoning the friendly provinces of Aragon and Catalonia to isolate themselves in a region where, with the population bitterly hostile to them, they could expect nothing but to be starved before they could fight their way back to the sea. It would be strange if, with a little prudent management, this egregious mistake could not be turned to account. All that Noailles could say would not convince the royal pair that Louis was really sincere in advising them to resign the crown of Spain. As King of France, with armies pressing on every one of his frontiers, with a realm thoroughly exhausted, and with

little prospect of being able to dispatch troops to Spain, he might think it his duty to counsel submission to his relations. But if he could speak to them as a private individual, he would be the last person to recommend the tame policy of resigning.*

Noailles was therefore dismissed with a charge to lay the true state of affairs before his master. The Queen and infant prince were sent off to Vittoria to be ready, in case of disaster, to make their escape into France; and Philip, with Vendôme at his side, took the field. That eccentric commander seemed determined for a time to rise superior to the bad habits and vices which often impaired his really great abilities. His first care was to march towards Estremadura to prevent the junction of the Portuguese troops with those of Stanhope and Staremberg.

The Allied officers meanwhile had been growing more and more uneasy at the reports which occasionally reached them of the storm that was brewing in the north. To secure themselves in Madrid for the winter was obviously impossible. Toledo, situated, like Jerusalem, on the summit of a craggy hill, seemed a little more defensible; but its fortifications had not been repaired since the days of the Moors. It was decided, however, to exchange Madrid for the latter city; and accordingly the Allied army, after having been in possession of the capital for two months, evacuated it, to the great delight of the citizens, towards the middle of November. Stanhope, after securing Toledo, marched westward with a division in hopes of finding the Portuguese regiments at Almaraz on the Tagus. But the cruel tidings reached him as he approached that town that his expected coadjutors, instead of responding to his reiterated summonses, had made one or two forward marches and then slunk back again behind their frontier. The position now occupied by Vendôme extinguished all hopes of their re-entering Spain.

Whether this disappointment arose through the imbecility of the King of Portugal, the supineness of his ministers, some of whom were notoriously in the French interest, or simply through the Portuguese forces being in a condition so melan-

* Mémoires de Noailles; St. Simon.

choly that they were literally unable to march, is a question into which it is needless to enter. Misfortunes soon came crowding upon the Allied army. News arrived that Noailles was preparing to invade Catalonia; and Charles, who had left his queen in Barcelona, at once insisted upon hurrying back to defend her. It became necessary to detach no less than two thousand cavalry to guard the precious person of the departing Prince on his journey. All thoughts of wintering in Castile were now abandoned. Stanhope indeed was the last officer to awake from his dreams of conquest. But it was too evident to every one else that, with Vendôme speeding towards them with a superior force, the only chance of safety that remained to the Allied army was to get back into Aragon as fast as possible.*

Early in December, therefore, upon the very day when Philip returned in triumph to his capital, the retreat commenced. One sad and never-to-be-forgotten mark of their residence in the time-honoured city of Toledo the Allies left behind them. Whether through accident, or the brutality of the Portuguese commander, the Alcazar, that grand relic of the Gothic kings of Spain, witness both of the defeat and triumph of Christian chivalry, of the valour, the arts, the luxury, the degeneracy of the Moors, was burnt to the ground. A terrible prospect of hunger, cold, and hardships lay before the Allied army. No stores of any description had been amassed. The season being winter, the earth was bare of vegetation. The small towns and villages along the line of march were known to be stricken by extreme poverty; and such was the infuriation of the peasantry against the heretical invaders, that straggling in search of provisions was certain death. To improve the chances of subsisting, Stanhope thought proper to separate with his English from Staremberg and the main body, and reached the town of Brihuega after three days' march, while his colleague was making for Cifuentes, another town, twelve miles distant. Here the English halted, and remained during two nights without misgivings. Upon the morning of the 8th, a body of horse made its appearance upon the hills near the town: but

* Stanhope to Dartmouth, November 6; November 18.

this circumstance at first excited no surprise; for a guerilla band, the same which had nearly pounced upon Charles in the Prado, had been hovering about the rear ever since the departure from Toledo. Before evening, however, some regiments of foot came in view, and then the terrible truth burst upon the English commander. Vendôme was upon them. By diligence which seemed in Stanhope's eyes little short of miraculous, he had contrived, within the space of a week, to transport his entire army over a hundred and thirty miles of country.

It was dark before the enemy was assembled in force, and Stanhope had therefore the whole night to prepare for defence. The English, with one Portuguese battalion, numbered between five and six thousand men; but they had no artillery, and only a scanty supply of ammunition for their small arms. The town, with the exception of a crumbling brick wall, had no fortifications whatever. Stanhope nevertheless determined to prolong his resistance to the utmost. He had the houses loopholed, the streets barricaded, and he sent off a messenger to inform Staremberg of his position. The attack upon Brihuega commenced with daylight. The Spanish cannon soon battered down the old wall, and then the fighting began in earnest. The assailants swarmed in through numerous breaches, and were received with so murderous a fire from invisible defenders that the town seemed wrapped in a conflagration. Again and again they returned to the assault. Philip and Vendôme, convinced that Staremberg must be approaching to the rescue, animated their men by every means in their power. The streets became choked with the dead. By degrees the Spaniards got possession of several houses. The English set them on fire; but the fire was extinguished. The evening again drew on; but it found the defenders almost at the end of their resources. Six hundred men had fallen. The ammunition of the survivors was nearly exhausted, and there was yet no sign of Staremberg's approach. Under these circumstances Stanhope conceived it to be his duty to save the lives of his gallant supporters, and ordered his drummers to beat a parley. The capitulation he offered was at once accepted by Vendôme. One of its articles provided that the officers should not be

separated from the regiments they commanded during the time they continued to be prisoners of war.*

Staremberg, while these incidents were passing, had conducted himself with more than his usual phlegm, perhaps not sorry that his headstrong colleague should have got into trouble. Stanhope's messenger had reached him an hour before midnight upon the 8th; but he made no movement until ten the next morning.† The distance to Brihuega, however, being only twelve miles, and every moment of value, it might have been thought that at least the greater portion of his troops would have contrived to get over the ground by sunset. But the whole day was consumed in compassing half the journey, and at nightfall Staremberg, after firing some signal guns to cheer his Allies, halted till morning. Upon the 10th he drew up his force in battle order, and advancing as leisurely as if time was of no importance whatever, came in sight soon after midday of the Spanish army, which Vendôme had carefully disposed to receive him. Its left wing touched Villa-viciosa, a village which gave its name to the battle which now ensued. The German, perceiving at last how matters stood, was inclined to make off; but Vendôme, eager to take advantage of his superior numbers, charged him on both wings. The engagement continued, with singularly various fortune, till night put an end to it. The Allied left, overwhelmed by a magnificent body of cavalry in which Philip himself had taken up his station, was completely routed, and chased to a considerable distance. The horse on the right wing also, being hotly pressed, fell into some confusion. The Spanish cavalry, however, imagining that the victory was won, began to plunder the baggage, and while absorbed in this

* My chief authority is the Narrative of Lord Mahon, compiled from the correspondence of Stanhope. Lamberty and the Lettres Historiques contain accounts of the action. I presume there is no foundation for this accusation in St. Simon against Stanhope—"C'est là où Stanhope, si triomphant dans Madrid, revomit les tapisseries du roi d'Espagne qu'il avait prises dans son palais." Boyer says that Stanhope was generally censured. He gives a letter from Count de Salvaterra attributing the disaster to Stanhope's ill conduct.

† Staremberg himself says, in a letter to Charles, December 10, "dès que je fus averti de l'état et du danger où se trouvaient les Anglais je fis marcher l'armée toute la nuit du 8 et tout le jour suivant pour les pouvoir dégager." Tindal, in a very circumstantial narrative, declares that the army did not march until ten the next morning, and the distance being so short the probabilities of the case seem to be in his favour.

occupation and far away from the main body, Staremberg, who, with much coolness and soldier-like ability, had kept his infantry intact, charged the hostile foot. In a few moments the position of the combatants was reversed. The Allied infantry bore down all before them. The Allied horse reappeared on the field in good order, and pursued the advantage gained by their comrades until the darkness came on. Each side could show its trophies of victory. The Spaniards had captured most of the baggage of the Allies. The Allies had taken a considerable part of the Spanish cannon.*

But Staremberg was in no condition to dispute the honours of the field. His army had shrunk to less than ten thousand men. The next day he resumed his retreat, and by almost incessant marching reached Saragossa. That city, however, friendly as were its inhabitants, was, owing to its entire want of fortifications, no safe place of refuge for the wearied Allies, and Vendôme was following closely on their track. Abandoning, therefore, all notions of defending Aragon, the German commander continued his flight, and early in January rejoined Charles in Barcelona. Again, as at the close of 1707, a few towns in Catalonia were all that the Allies could show for the blood and treasure they had squandered in Spain.

* Staremberg's letter to Charles printed in Lamberty; Lettres Historiques; St. Simon.

CHAPTER VIII.

To the sanguine spirit and impetuosity of Stanhope is perhaps to be attributed in the first degree the failure of that branch of the war which the Allies carried on against the two crowns in Spain. England indeed, which, after eight years of continual fighting, showed fewer signs of exhaustion than any other Power in Europe, might doubtless still have re-established the affairs of Charles in the Peninsula without unduly straining her resources. But while Stanhope was perpetrating the series of errors which led to the capture of the English troops at Brihuega, circumstances at home were rendering those errors irretrievable.

During the entire month of October and the first half of November the elections were being held for the new Parliament, and the clamour and confusion that prevailed might have forced a foreigner to the conviction that the English were a nation of madmen. In only two instances had the Ministers made a change in the lieutenancies of counties; but the majority of the electors and the unfranchised millions pressing upon those electors were in a frame of mind such as rendered superfluous any measures by a Tory Government to influence the returns. The sight of the reverend martyr for passive obedience and hereditary right had stirred up religious feeling to the pitch of frenzy in those districts through which he had condescended to pass, and the elector who voted in defiance of public opinion must have been indifferent to the fate of his person and his windows. The Tories, moreover, had, as a rule, been quick to seize their advantages, had been early in the field, and had canvassed with immense success. The clergy took a keen interest in their cause; for not a doubt was entertained by this class but that the triumph of the Whigs would

be the overthrow of Christianity in England. Rectors and vicars, not content with exhortations from the pulpit, might be seen as the time of the elections approached, wending from house to house, and imploring their flock to save the Church by returning men of right principles to Parliament. A strange stupor seemed to have come over the Whigs. Their organization under eminent leaders had, in this instance, been injurious to them; for those leaders had, with singular infatuation, clung first to the opinion that there would be no dissolution, and then to the delusion that no change had taken place in the sentiments of the middle classes. Many a seat was lost by the dilatoriness of the candidate arising out of an overweening confidence in his claims. A Whig was generally disposed to stand proudly upon the splendid military reputation which had been built up for his country during those two last Parliaments in which Whig influence had been predominant. The theological absurdities upon which the public mind was running he would scarcely deign to notice. Was this the time, he would put it to the electors, when France was suing for peace, when a treaty was being negotiated which would cover England with glory and render her prosperous beyond example,—was this the time to discard the men whose energy and public spirit had mainly conduced to this happy state of affairs? Was it judicious to confide the settlement of our disputes with France to men who had been averse to engage in the war, and had since done all in their power to hamper our armies and commanders? But such arguments, however convincing they may have once seemed, had now lost their effect. Most persons were ruminating upon very different subjects, and did not think that victories over French armies and captures of French towns were any answer to the charge of oppressing God's clergymen and trying to overturn His Church. It may indeed be asserted confidently that not one elector in a hundred who now transferred his vote to the Tory side, was induced to act thus through any dissatisfaction with the Whigs on account of their conduct of the war. The suspicion that it was improperly prolonged, although now first suggested, had not as yet taken root. But there was a general belief that the Whigs were in a conspiracy against religion, and were forcing the pious and gentle Queen to join

with them in measures she abhorred. Nine-tenths of the nation rushed forward, therefore, to the rescue of the two most cherished objects of their affections, their sovereign and the Church.

In the city of London the Ministers departed from their general rule by taking some precautions to ensure the returns. Sir Gilbert Heathcote, whose interference in favour of Godolphin had excited some little ire in Harley's breast, had been chosen, mainly through the firmness of the Aldermen, Lord Mayor for the ensuing year. To counteract the formidable influence of a man who was at the same time Governor of the Bank and the most important civic dignitary in the realm, the commission of lieutenancy of the city was remodelled. The six regiments of trained bands were placed under the command of six Tory citizens. But such precautions were scarcely needed. Nowhere was the capriciousness of public feeling more strikingly shown than in London, the ancient stronghold of Whiggism. The result of a poll, which the defeated candidates scrutinized without detecting material errors or dishonesty, was the return of four members of the Church party. Sir Gilbert, besides losing his election, underwent the mortification of being roughly handled by the populace as he left Guildhall, and one ruffian vented his political wrath by spitting in his face. The city wore an appearance of joy as after some great triumph. The clergy, who had done their part in the struggle, announced the success of the good cause by ringing the bells of their churches. At night bonfires blazed in every open space. The houses were for the most part illuminated after the modest fashion of our ancestors, and the mob went about smashing the windows in which no lights appeared.

In the city, owing to the strong semi-military force at the disposal of the authorities, the elections passed over without producing more than the ordinary amount of disturbance. But Westminster, where the police arrangements were much weaker, was the scene of a tremendous riot. Some Whig gentlemen had insisted upon putting up Stanhope, notwithstanding his absence in Spain; and upon the day of nomination Sir Henry Davenport, who was to propose him, rode down with Sir Henry Colt, the other Whig candidate, at the head of a procession. A

High Church rabble had congregated round the hustings, enthusiastic supporters of Medlicot and Crosse, the opposing Tories, and the procession had to fight its way to the platform. Stones, dead cats, and rotten eggs flew about as in a pantomime, and the casualties of broken heads and bloody noses kept all the neighbouring surgeons fully employed. One furious partisan committed the un-Englishlike act of discharging a pistol, the bullet from which struck a bawling Whig butcher. Davenport and Colt appealed to the Sheriff for protection, but the Sheriff's resources for keeping the peace were anything but adequate to the emergency. A few miserable old men, designated the watch, some of them crippled and others half blind, formed the only force upon which that officer could rely for the apprehension of disorderly persons; and the watch, never too desirous of coping with a single muscular thief, always had the prudence to keep out of sight in times of extraordinary confusion. Upon no subject, indeed, has the peaceable citizen of the nineteenth century more cause to rejoice that he was not born earlier into the world than upon the subject of police. The individual who now walks the streets with the knowledge that strong and vigilant protectors are on all sides of him, and travels to Edinburgh or Penzance without being disturbed by the fear of highwaymen, can hardly realize without shuddering the fact that less than a hundred years ago a man had to depend mainly on his own strength and courage for the preservation of his life and property. Upon the ensuing day the Whigs, organized into ranks, endeavoured to keep open a passage for their voters to the hustings, but to little purpose. Every respectable person who entered the Strand was stopped, questioned as to his politics, and knocked down or allowed to pass according to his answers. Under these circumstances the close of the poll revealed an overwhelming triumph for the Tory candidates. Crosse, who polled the least number of votes on the popular side, polled nearly twice as many as Stanhope, who stood highest of the Whigs.*

* For details relating to the elections see Burnet; Boyer; Lettres Historiques; Oldmixon; Luttrell's Brief Relation. Authors of the libellous class were exceedingly active during this period. "C'est le génie," says the calm writer of the Lettres Historiques, "de la nation Anglaise de décharger son cœur et sa passion sur le papier. Soit à beau, soit à mal, il faut que la presse roule." An

The 25th of November, the day fixed for the assembling of Parliament, had almost arrived before the elections had concluded in all parts of the country. The large number of boroughs then existing, in which the influence of local magnates was omnipotent, no doubt stood the Whigs in good stead. It is noticeable that the managers of Sacheverell's prosecution, whose names were about as unpopular throughout the country as had been those of Bradshaw and Ludlow after the Restoration, contrived, with but one exception, to retain their seats. Cockermouth was the refuge of Stanhope and Lechmere. Castle Rising, the patrimony of the Walpoles, submissively returned its owner. Beeralston allowed itself to be represented by Sir Peter King, and Eye by Sir Joseph Tekyll. Wharton's influence was still powerful enough to get his secretary chosen for Malmesbury, and his secretary was the moderate Whig, Joseph Addison.

But the general results of the elections not only extinguished all hope in the Whigs, but even excited alarm in Harley and those of his party who were averse to extreme measures. All that they had desired was just such a preponderance of Tories as would prevent the Whigs from absorbing more than their fair share of dignities and places, and managing the war as they pleased. But the country had responded to their appeal in the same manner as Jupiter answered the farmer's petition for rain, by inundating his fields. A terrible reaction from the policy of the last few years was to be apprehended. The present Parliament comprised but too many politicians of the old English school, honest squires pledged to persecute the Dissenters and endow the Church with additional means of tyrannizing, burning with resentment against the merchants and stock-jobbers who had so long usurped the reins of government, and eager to scrutinize every act of the late Ministers in the hope of discovering matter of impeachment against some of them.

A little before the assembling of Parliament an incident occurred which raised to a still higher pitch the public feeling against the unpopular party. The 6th of November had been

Irishman named Neale was set in the pillory for publishing that the Queen intended to abdicate in favour of the Pretender and retire to a convent.

fixed for the day of thanksgiving, and it had been fully expected that her Majesty would pay her usual state visit to St. Paul's. But the gorgeous pageant which had annually delighted the Londoners since the commencement of the reign, was on this occasion omitted. The *Te Deum* was performed before the Queen and her court in the private chapel of St. James's. Three days afterwards appeared in the *Gazette* an advertisement bearing the signature of Secretary St. John, which to the multitude appeared a very sufficient reason for her Majesty's abstaining from entering the cathedral. It was announced that, some evil designing persons having unscrewed and taken away several iron bolts out of the great timbers of the west roof of St. Paul's, a free pardon and fifty pounds would be awarded to any one who made a discovery of his accomplices in the fact. A few years back or a few years further on in the history of this country a deed of this kind would at once have been attributed to the Papists. But the Whigs had for the moment supplanted the Papists in that office of national scapegoats which they had so long and so patiently held. A broadside was immediately in circulation informing all good and loyal subjects of the discovery of a horrid plot of the Whigs to pull down the roof of St. Paul's upon her Majesty. Some time elapsed before any inquiry was instituted by the Government. The fact then came out that bolts had never been employed in the construction of the edifice, because the roof was perfectly secure without them.*

The Commons assembled; and Bromley, long one of the acknowledged leaders of the High Church party, and who had been among the warmest advocates for the occasional conformity bill, was chosen Speaker without any useless opposition from the Whigs. Every Court in Europe was anxious to hear in what terms Anne would address her Parliament now that she was emancipated from thraldom.† But the speech had been composed by men whose leading object it was to avoid giving offence, and its divergence from previous speeches would scarcely be detected except by readers familiar with the political

* Lettres Historiques; Boyer.

† There was a report on the Continent that the Queen intended to offer the command of her troops to the Elector of Hanover.—Lamberty.

cant and party cries of the time. A recommendation to prosecute the war vigorously, especially in Spain, was understood as a censure upon the late Government for having directed its principal efforts against the Netherlands. Could it have been known that, even while the Queen was speaking, the British troops were maintaining in Brihuega a desperate struggle against overwhelming odds, the passions that this paragraph excited would have been furious indeed. A clause referring to the heavy public debt already incurred, coupled with words amounting almost to a command that the like should be prevented in future, carried no little dismay to the hearts of the late Ministers, who might think it foreboded malicious inquiry into their system of expenditure. In Church matters the only noticeable change was that, instead of the usual promise to maintain the Toleration, Anne employed a formula more pleasing to Tory ears. She engaged to maintain the indulgence allowed by law to scrupulous consciences.

Eager as were many resentful spirits to rake into the conduct of those who had been recently in power, their fear of displeasing Anne determined them to forego their zeal for inquiry until the most needed supplies had been voted. The liberality of the Commons upon this head must have relieved many anxious minds both at home and abroad. It was resolved that the army and navy should be continued at the same strength as in the previous year. The subsidies payable to the Allies were also agreed to without dispute. No less a sum than fifteen hundred thousand pounds was assigned to carrying on the war in Spain and Portugal. The whole amount voted for the naval and military services of 1711 reached nearly seven millions, a larger sum than had ever yet been accorded by an English Parliament. It was given without a murmur; for the Tories seemed determined not to be outdone by their rivals in liberality and devotion to their sovereign. But the conscience of many an honest squire must have smote him that, by consenting to such extravagance, he was lending a helping hand to the ruin of poor old England.

To vote supplies was an easy matter: but the difficulty was how to raise the money. The financial condition of England was, in truth, in a state which might well perplex any statesman who lived before the hundred inventions of the nineteenth

century had developed and multiplied the resources of Government. Every year the charges of the war had kept on increasing; and every year the Ministers had been driven to make up the deficiency of the revenue by borrowing. There were now few taxes—except the land tax and malt duty, which were annual grants—the produce of which was not charged with the payment of a heavy debt. The total of these incumbrances at the close of 1710 fell little short of forty millions; and the high interest payable upon this amount probably consumed one half of the five millions or thereabouts which annually flowed into the Exchequer. It followed that Government was under the necessity of borrowing annually between three and four millions to meet the expenditure sanctioned by Parliament, and that each year while the war lasted a still larger amount would have to be borrowed. It was regarded by many Englishmen as one of the wonders of the age that, while the State was pursuing a course which, if the case were that of a private individual, could end in nothing but ruin, capitalists should still be willing to lend their money to it; nay, that they should be so partial to the investment as to accept lower rates of interest than had formerly prevailed. There was a widely diffused opinion, which the Whigs had done their best to foster, that the talisman for attracting money to the State coffers was the special property of Godolphin. He alone, it was insisted, could inspire the necessary confidence; for upon his uprightness and punctuality in meeting engagements every creditor could rely. The first consequence of his dismissal accordingly had been a rush to sell tallies, exchequer bills and bank stock; and a heavy decline in prices had been established. It was this panic which had greeted Harley upon his accession to the Treasury, and which had rendered his position embarrassing in the extreme; for without the confidence of the monied men it was obviously impossible that the Government could be carried on for a single year. His very first measure therefore had been to employ authors to demonstrate the folly of attaching the national credit to this or that minister instead of to the honesty of the sovereign and Parliament. There is reason to think that Defoe was the writer of a series of masterly treatises upon finance, some of which Harley condescended to publish to the world as his own

composition.* But arguments to prove that the security of the public creditor rested not on any particular minister, but on the honour of the whole nation as represented by the Parliament, by no means disposed of the difficulty. The real question then disturbing monetary circles was, whether such a Parliament as that now assembled at Westminster was to be trusted. In November of this year, Swift commenced a series of articles in the *Examiner*, the object of which was to show that the late Ministers were little better than rogues, and that the policy they had adopted throughout their term of office was detrimental to the interests of the country. In the first paper of that series he gravely put forward a calculation that, if the funds appropriated to the payment of interest and annuities were added to the yearly taxes, they would very nearly, if not fully, supply the occasions of the war.† If a Tory of such abilities and of such experience of society as Swift could thus call attention to the convenience of repudiating the national debt, what may we assume to have been the sentiments of the illiterate and prejudiced country gentlemen who formed the bulk of this Parliament? Of the evils which dishonesty must entail upon any State which gives way to it, their notions were probably of the faintest kind. They had not themselves a penny in the public stocks, which might have assisted them, through the medium of self-interest, to a sense of what was right and just. In truth, many country gentlemen would at this period have considered such an investment for his savings as disgraceful. They could see that the men of their own order, and the class with which they were in daily contact, the landed proprietors, farmers, agricultural labourers, would all experience immediate relief if the national creditors were turned adrift or forced to wait for their money till the close of the war. And who would be the parties injured by such a course? A parcel of usurers, stock-jobbers, and such-like Whig rats, who were eating up the country and making fortunes out of the public distresses.

After much deliberation the Ministers decided that of all the plans for raising money a lottery seemed most likely to be suc-

* They are printed in extenso in Somers's Tracts.
† This is No. 13 of the *Examiner*.

cessful. Two bills authorizing and setting apart funds for this purpose were passed during the session; and so strong was the temptation of the public to this kind of investment that in a very few days the subscription lists were filled up.

The close of the year brought back Marlborough. How the great man would behave was still a subject of some anxiety. But the Ministers, since the elections, had grown much less afraid of him. Their views were, in general, that if he would abate his pretensions to autocracy, and regard himself simply as an ordinary servant of the Queen, it would be for the common interest that he should remain Commander-in-Chief. But his resignation would now be of no more consequence than as it might occasion a little vulgar clamour.* Their conduct towards him since their accession to power had not been of a kind to make him forget the mortifications to which he had been subjected. The dictatorial tone adopted by St. John in his official letters must have been painful to a man whom Walpole and Boyle had been accustomed to address in language almost as respectful as that usually reserved by statesmen for the perusal of sovereigns. At one of the first sittings of the Lords, Scarborough, an ardent but somewhat indiscreet friend of the Duke, had moved that the House should accord its customary vote of thanks to him. But an intimation was quietly conveyed to the Earl not to press his motion; and it was withdrawn, though not before it had excited some bitter remarks from Argyle.† The Queen had, during the autumn, administered a warning to the officers of the army not to concern themselves about politics. An order to dispose of their regiments had been sent to three of them who, at the mess-table, had drunk the health of the Commander-in-Chief, declared that they would stand by him, and had insulted a scarecrow which they had dressed up and called "Harley." But it was absolutely necessary that the hero should put up with one more

* Several letters of St. John to Drummond of this period. "If he comes home and disengages himself from the Whigs; if he puts a stop to the rage and fury of his wife; in short, if he abandons all his new and takes up with his old friends; by the Queen's favour and by the remains of regard for him which are preserved in the breasts of several people, he may not only stand his ground but establish himself in as lofty a position as it becomes a subject to aspire to."

† St. John remarks (November 28, December 9), "One would imagine that Scarborough had been hired by somebody that wishes Lord Marlborough ill to take so unconcerted and ridiculous a measure."

affront, and one that was likely to cause him deeper distress than any to which he had yet been subjected. The dismissal of his wife from all the offices which it was in the Queen's power to take from her had been determined upon. The hour of that audacious woman who had so long tyrannized over her sovereign had arrived. Anne was peremptory; and it would have been dangerous for those who had the ear of her Majesty to attempt, even if they had the wish, to baulk her inclinations.

For the last two months Tory writers had been busily employed in scribbling down the illustrious warrior. Foremost of the tribe was Swift. The witty clergyman had returned from Ireland during the autumn, charged by the primate of that kingdom to renew the application he had formerly made for the remission of the first-fruits and tenths on Irish benefices. To advance his business he had sought an interview with Harley. The cordiality with which he was received by the successful statesman evidently took him by surprise. The former ministers, Godolphin, Somers, and Wharton, who were neither very favourably disposed towards himself nor the errand upon which he came, had been accustomed to put him off with excuses, and had treated him with a cold formality not a little exasperating to his haughty spirit. Harley at once evinced the most captivating eagerness to secure his friendship, and from that moment became to Swift a patron to be esteemed, revered, and fought for.* The fine wit was soon punning and rhyming at Harley's table in company with St. John and most of the leading Tories. The intimacy indeed to which the Doctor was publicly admitted by these two prominent men, gave no slight scandal to serious-minded partisans. For amusing as Swift undoubtedly was as a companion, and useful as he might be as a literary champion, his character was not exactly of a kind to reflect credit upon statesmen who stood forward as supporters of the Church. He was widely known as the author of a satire upon the feuds prevailing among the professors of Christianity, which had given grave offence to

* Harley told Swift candidly for what his services were required. "The great difficulty was to find some good pen to keep up the spirit raised in the people, to assert the principles and justify the proceedings of the new Ministers." Memoirs Relating to the Change of Ministers; Swift to Archbishop King, October 10—21.

most respectable divines by the levity with which a solemn subject was handled. But if the purpose of Harley and St. John were to secure the pen of an admirable writer, their attentions were not thrown away. The politics of Swift had hitherto been those of a Whig. His gratitude towards the great men who disdained the unfeeling usages of society and regarded as their equal the poor Irish clergyman, converted him into a zealous Tory. His enemies were now Harley's enemies: he rushed into the battle, and soon proved himself a giant in controversy, beneath whose irresistible blows whole legions of puny scribblers went down. The Whig party, although rich in orators, possessed at that time no man of literary talents capable of supporting for a moment a contest with the robust genius of Swift. Addison, unequalled as a writer of harmonious sentences, graceful allegories, and amusing expositions of the foibles of beaus and coquettes, took up the cause of his friends; but had the good sense to retire from the fray after breaking a modest lance or two.* Defoe, far better qualified by the strength and earnestness of his mind, his power of logic, and his great command of language, to cope with the Irishman, had been engaged, if not to the side of the Tories, at least to neutrality by the wise benevolence of Harley. Maynwaring was an author of merit, but incapable of that vivacity which can alone ensure a public hearing. Oldmixon could do nothing but rant and abuse. The Tories had, some months back, at the time when the dissolution of Parliament was still doubtful, started a periodical called the *Examiner*. Although the doctrines of the party had been advocated with the usual amount of virulence, the contributors had as yet abstained from animadverting upon particular persons or measures. But Swift felt that, under the protection of his patrons, he might bid defiance to the Attorney-General and the pillory; and in November the town was diverted by a paper upon a subject of the keenest interest. Multitudes of persons, even those who were loudest in their abuse of the Whigs, were yet troubled by a compunction that Marlborough had been hardly dealt with in the recent changes. It was considered as scarcely a grateful return to the veteran general who had raised his country to the height of military

* In the Whig *Examiner*, which, however, extended only to five numbers.

renown, to turn his friends and relations out of office. Swift set himself to remove these scruples. His argument was that, if the Duke had done his duty well, he had been well paid for it; and he drew an amusing comparison between the pecuniary value of the rewards of a Roman conqueror and those of the English warrior. The gratitude of the Romans, evinced in a laurel crown, a bull for sacrifice, a handful of copper medals, a fine car, and a triumphal arch, involved them in an outlay of not more than nine hundred and ninty-four pounds, eleven shillings, and tenpence. The British public had shown its ingratitude by conferring upon Marlborough posts which might be valued at five hundred and forty thousand pounds.*

But the popularity of a hero, like a fashionable superstition or a mode of dress, is not easily to be extinguished by argument and ridicule. Marlborough, upon making his entry into London, was welcomed by the populace with undiminished enthusiasm. It was dark; but links and torches held up by innumerable hands flamed about his coach, while the streets rang with the cries by which Englishmen testified their antipathy to Catholicism and France—"No Popery! no wooden shoes!" Judging that a reception of this kind would only serve to increase the ill-feeling of his enemies, he prudently stopped his coach at Montague House, waited until his admirers had dispersed, and then proceeded in a common street vehicle to St. James's. Anne was too much embarrassed at her first interview with her former friend to talk of any other subject than the weather. But the next morning, having fortified herself, it may be presumed, with some counsel from her new confidants, she declared her pleasure with sulky ungraciousness. She was still desirous, she told the Duke, that he should continue to serve her: he should have no cause to complain of the conduct of her Ministers: but she had to request him to discountenance any efforts his friends might make to procure him a vote of thanks from the Parliament.†

Marlborough was all humility. He had long since made up his mind to endure any mortification which the Queen could

* This is No. 16 of the *Examiner*, the wickedest but cleverest squib, I think, in the language.

† Coxe's Memoirs; Burnet.

inflict or his enemies devise, if only he were permitted to retain his position. He knew that the hardest trial of all to his feelings and his sense of dignity was approaching. It was with difficulty that her Majesty had been persuaded by her new counsellors to wait till the close of the campaign before she wreaked her vengeance upon the Duchess. The behaviour of that singular personage had been during the last few months more provoking than at any time before. The principal object for which she was now striving seems to have been to procure the reversion of her places for her daughters. Having grown weary of the fruitless method of despatching to her mistress narratives of her faithful services, extracts from sermons bearing upon the mutual obligations between friends, copies of epistles to remind her Majesty of vows and promises she had made in the past days of doting affection, of all which not the least notice was taken, the termagant resolved to change her tactics. She would force the Queen to be as good as her word. She vowed and declared to every one that, unless justice were done her, she would prove to the world what a liar her Majesty was, by publishing her letters.* The threat was duly reported by good-natured sycophants to Anne, and excited no little terror in the royal breast. It would seem that the Duchess was only saved from perpetrating a scandalous outrage, which would in all probability have brought a loyal mob beneath the windows of her palace, by the intervention of the Queen's physician, Sir David Hamilton. He was in the habit of conversing with Anne almost daily, and expressed himself to the discarded favourite as being not altogether without hopes that a compromise, if not a complete reconciliation, might be effected between the two. The excellent man laboured earnestly to turn the Queen from her design of dismissing the Duchess, which, he thought, would occasion a public calamity. His view of the case was, in fact, that taken by most persons. Marlborough, the indispensable general, had, from a sense of public duty, submitted to many affronts hard to be borne; but there was a point at which flesh and blood must rebel. That the Duke would continue to serve a Queen who should put a mark of disgrace upon the wife he idolized, was scarcely to be

* Bolingbroke to Drummond, November 28, December 9.

expected even from his temperate nature. The physician sent from time to time cheering reports of expressions her Majesty had let fall, which might seem to denote that some sparks of affection were still lingering in her breast. One day in January he sent word that the Queen was in a humour more than ordinarily soft and gracious. He had been telling her that the Duke's distress on account of the displeasure she had conceived against the Duchess was so great, that he had fallen ill; and Anne appeared to be touched by the information. This, he added, was the time to address her. Marlborough hastened to the palace. He presented to the Queen a letter from his wife. But either Hamilton had mistaken her Majesty's feelings, or the mere sight of the husband of her old tormentor revived all her indignation. The letter addressed in that well-known hand she at first refused to open; but she yielded at last to the Duke's entreaties, and glanced through it. The Duchess, in a style unusually humble, expressed her regret that she should have done anything to offend her Majesty, and promised to abstain for the future from referring to any unpleasant subject. "I had never thought," she said, "to trouble your Majesty again in this manner; but the circumstances in which I see my Lord Marlborough, and my apprehension that he cannot live six months if an end be not put to his sufferings on my account, make it impossible for me to resist doing anything in my power to give him ease." Anne remained perfectly unmoved by what she had read. She perhaps regarded the sufferings of my Lord Marlborough with the same suspicious contempt as Mary of Medicis was accustomed to regard the hypocritical tears of Cardinal Richelieu. "I cannot change my resolution," was the remark with which she laid the letter down. The Duke continued for the best part of an hour to intercede for his wife. He implored her Majesty, if she were determined to dismiss the Duchess, at least to defer her sentence till the conclusion of the war, which he hoped would be in another year, when they might both retire from her service together. But Anne was in one of those stubborn, silent moods in which she but too closely resembled the old tyrant, her father. Teased by the Duke's importunity, she at length broke out in a rage, and insisted

that the Duchess's gold key should be brought to her within three days. Marlborough was petrified at this result of his eloquence. He fell on his knees. He asked for an interval of only ten days, that some expedient might be devised to lessen the humiliation that must accrue to him by a sentence so sudden and unexplained. The only effect of his prayers was to arouse in Anne the imperious blood of that hard, cruel, despotic race from which she was descended. "I will now have the key brought to me within two days," were the peremptory words with which she cut short all further intercession. "I will talk of no other business until I have the key," she added, when Marlborough, having risen from his knees, commenced a fresh subject.*

The unhappy hero quitted the presence of an enraged queen to return to the society of a still more violently enraged wife. The Duchess, upon hearing her Majesty's decision, took the gold key from her side, tossed it into the middle of the room, and bade her husband pick it up and carry it where he pleased.† That same evening Marlborough returned to the palace, and delivered up the token of his wife's offices. He made one last effort to excite the compassion of the Queen, but to no purpose. The embarrassment of Anne was visible; but it was at the same time evident that her resolution had undergone no change.

By the following day the news of the Duchess's disgrace had spread through the town, and it was confidently affirmed that the great general would avenge himself for the affront by laying down his command.‡ But days and weeks went by, and there was no official information that Marlborough had resigned. It was even noticed with wonder that a better understanding than heretofore appeared to exist between him and the new Ministers. Indeed, during the remainder of the Duke's stay in England he seemed to devote himself principally to two objects—to regain the friendship of some influential

* Coxe's Memoirs. Bolingbroke remarks to Drummond, January 19—30, "My Lord Marlborough brought last night his wife's key to the Queen, and if he had begun by making this step it had been better, since nothing could sour the Queen's mind more than the endeavours he used to keep the Duchess in her places. He promises very fair. I believe all the Queen's servants will behave themselves so as to make his serving abroad not only practicable but easy to him."

† Dartmouth's Note on Burnet.

‡ See the remarks made by Boyer and Burnet.

Tories whom he had long neglected, and to remedy the mischief which was likely to ensue from the conduct of his wife, who kept railing against the Queen in all sorts of company with the heartiness of a fishwoman.*

Before Parliament reassembled after the Christmas recess intelligence had reached the country of the disaster to the British troops in Spain. To the Tories, in whose minds party feeling predominated for the time over patriotic feeling, the news was not altogether unwelcome. It afforded them just the occasion they desired for venting their animosity against the former Ministers. An attack upon the late Government was immediately commenced, but it may seem remarkable that it was commenced in the Upper House, where the Whigs had hitherto reigned supreme. The explanation is that the returns of peers from Scotland, which had been in every instance favourable to the High Church party, had now inclined the balance to the Tory side. The Lords, in answer to a message from her Majesty, intimated that, as the misfortune had probably originated in some preceding mismanagement, it was their intention to trace it to its source. An inquiry into the conduct of the war in Spain from its very outset was at once instituted by a committee of the whole House. Peterborough, whose prospects had cleared with the decline of Marlborough's influence, was on the eve of departing as ambassador to Vienna; but the House applied to the Queen, and he was ordered to postpone his journey. That restless genius was soon reproducing before a sympathetic audience the same charges against the leading officers of the army in Spain, which three years before he had related to cold and reluctant hearers. The Peers sent to desire the attendance of Lords Galway and Tyrawley, and a chair was placed for the former without the bar. That person must have been indeed a zealot for party who could look unmoved upon the intrepid veteran, who, maimed and frightfully disfigured in the wars of his adopted country, was thus called upon in his old age to defend his conduct. His military career had been singularly unfortunate. From Neerwinden to the battle on the Caya it had been nothing but a series of disasters. He had never been in action

* Dartmouth's Note on Burnet.

except on the losing side, and had rarely emerged from any fight without receiving some horrible wound by which to remember it. He was now subjected to a severe and malicious examination touching his behaviour when in Spain. It was impossible for Marlborough, who properly appreciated the zeal and honesty of Galway, to stand by without attempting to interpose between him and his persecutors. "It seems a strange thing," he remarked, "that generals who have acted to the best of their abilities, and have lost their limbs in the service, should be questioned as if they were offenders about trifles." But a vindictive majority of the House was not to be deterred by considerations of delicacy from striking through Galway at those Ministers upon whose instructions Galway declared that he had always acted. The only favour accorded him was permission, on account of his imperfect acquaintance with the English language, to put in a written narrative of his proceedings.

Tyrawley was next examined. As Sir Charles Hara he had achieved a reputation for embezzling the stores; and not knowing what the object of the Lords might be in their inquiry, he thought it prudent to give them as little information as possible. "When I was in the army," he said, in a tone which he hoped might pass for the bluff honesty of a simple-minded soldier, "I was not accustomed to carry pen and ink about with me, but only my sword, which I used as best I could upon occasion. All I recollect in general was that we always acted upon the resolutions passed in the councils of war."

The narrative submitted by Galway was a plain, and bore all the appearance of being an honest, account of the proceedings of the army and its leaders in Spain. It is by no means so clear that Peterborough, in many of his representations, adhered so strictly to truth. But it is impossible to toil through the mass of documents bearing upon this subject without one conviction forcing itself upon the mind. Galway, although personally as brave as a lion, and sufficiently acquainted with the details of his profession, was more fitted for a subordinate than for the chief place in an army. Peterborough, on the other hand, unquestionably possessed high military genius, and had he been unfettered by rivals, would, with great probability, have

conducted the war to a very different termination. For the low opinion which Marlborough had conceived of him it is not difficult to account. That staid and sober observer of men could not but remark that an atmosphere of bickering and wrangling accompanied the conqueror of Barcelona wherever he went. If he approached the person of a monarch, ministers, counsellors, and favourites were speedily wrought to such a pitch of fury as to endanger the friendly relations of their master with the English Government. From the moment he joined an army such enmities broke out among the officers as to paralyze every operation of war. His flightiness, his eccentricity, his eternal babble about his grievances, his complaints against monarchs, ministers and generals with which he was for ever assailing the Parliament and the Queen, rendered him in Marlborough's eyes little better than an universal tormentor. But in this opinion a majority of the Peers did not coincide. It was sufficient for them that Peterborough had been slighted, and that those who had thwarted him in Spain, Galway, Tyrawley, and Stanhope, had been upheld by the former Government. The resolution which passed their House was that both the defeat at Almanza and the failure of the expedition to Toulon arose from these three generals advocating an offensive system of war.

There can be little doubt, viewing the matter after the event, that Peterborough's recommendation to act on the defensive was the best which the Allied army could have adopted in the beginning of 1707. But a majority of the officers who sat in the councils of war held at Valencia had differed from the Earl: there was no evidence that their opinions had been improperly influenced; and it may therefore appear unjust and absurd to place a public stigma upon commanders who have acted in strict conformity with military rules, merely because their plans have turned out unfortunate. The Tories, however, were determined to press on to the goal they had originally proposed to themselves. The inquiry was resumed, and Anne, who had attended the previous debates, was again prevailed upon to animate her favourite party with her presence. It was now attempted to be shown that the fatal policy adopted by the generals had been approved and sanctioned by the

former Ministers. Copies of the correspondence between the Secretaries of State and the commanders in Spain were procured by application to the Queen, and read to the House. Sunderland's letters placed it beyond all doubt that in 1707 the Government had given its support to the plans of Galway and Stanhope of marching to Madrid by way of Valencia and Aragon, and afforded clear evidence that Peterborough's commission as ambassador to Charles had been revoked expressly in order that he might cease to embarrass them by his opposition. The Tories required no further testimony. By one resolution it was decided that the Ministry were justly to blame for contributing to all the misfortunes in Spain, and to the failure of the expedition to Toulon; by another that Peterborough had performed many great and eminent services, and that had his advice been followed misfortune would not have occurred. A vote of thanks to the Earl was carried without a division.

Thirty-six peers, including all the great Whig leaders, Marlborough and Godolphin, recorded their dissent to these resolutions. An unusually full account of the debates has been preserved. The Duke spoke more than once with that weight and authority which his position as the most trusted servant of the Crown gave him, and exerted himself strenuously in the defence of Galway. "God Almighty," he observed, "has hitherto blessed my own endeavours; but if men are to be censured when they give their opinions to the best of their understandings, I must expect to be found fault with as well as the rest." The vehemence of Argyle, who never lost an opportunity of carping at Marlborough, frequently degenerated into rudeness. An excellent summary of the objections of the Whigs to the first resolution was afforded by Lord Mohun, a nobleman who, having disgraced his early years by crimes for which he ought to have forfeited his life to the laws, had since somewhat redeemed his good name by a more orderly demeanour. "I am against it," he said, "for three reasons: first, because I know not who are meant by the 'Ministry;' and it is not right to include in a censure persons who neither deserve nor are intended to be blamed: secondly, because to recommend an offensive war was at the time no bad advice; and thirdly,

because I would have men be just to one another, and not censure those who give their opinions with honest intentions."

The Tories were not even yet satisfied with the marks of disapproval they had bestowed upon Galway. They proceeded to impose a cruel and apparently a most unjust stigma upon his conduct. By far the greater portion of the army with which he entered Spain was composed of Portuguese. The officers of these regiments, proud and punctilious men, insisted upon retaining after the border was crossed that privilege of marching in front, which they enjoyed by express stipulation so long as they were in their own country. Galway, who could not have stirred without their support, was induced to waive the claims of his own English soldiers to the post of honour. It was now resolved, by sixty-four lords against forty-four, that by so doing he had acted contrary to the dignity of the Imperial Crown of Great Britain. All these resolutions were laid before Anne in the form of a representation, a good specimen of party writing, maliciously pointed in every line against those counsellors by whose advice she had, until within a few months, been governed.*

While the Upper House was arraigning the former Ministers for their conduct of the war in Spain, the Commons were pursuing, in a similar vindictive spirit, an inquiry into their financial policy. The petitions about controverted elections had been of course decided with a strong bias in favour of defeated Tories; nor had the Whigs much right to complain of injustice which they had never scrupled to commit themselves when they had the power. The consequence was that, when the Parliament reassembled after the Christmas recess, the majority of the Tories had increased to such proportions as enabled the party to indulge in any resolutions to which their interest or their passions impelled them. As the old Government had been greatly applauded for the wisdom of its financial system, it was a great object with Harley to show that this praise had not been merited; and the attention of the House was called to the subject.

The Queen had in her speech referred to the large debt which had been incurred in the department of the Navy. It

* Parliamentary History.

had steadily increased during the whole period of Godolphin's administration, and now exceeded five millions sterling. It was indeed to the men of that age a great, a ruinous debt, perhaps exceeding the capacity of the nation ever to discharge; and such was the uneasiness felt in commercial circles that bills on the Navy had fallen to a considerable discount. The method of providing for this branch of the public service was an annual grant by Parliament of four pounds a month to forty thousand men; and this amount the Tories professed to believe sufficient for the purpose, if properly applied. Such being the case, the debt would admit of only two explanations. Either great and culpable extravagance had been suffered to prevail in the department; or the Treasurer, careless as to what became of the effectiveness and credit of the Navy so long as his friend in Flanders was well supplied with money, had diverted the funds.*

While the House was brooding revengefully over this grievance, an intimation was made by Harley that the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury, having instituted an inquiry, had detected some gross abuses in the victualling of the Navy. A committee was appointed to pursue this investigation, and the report, which was soon afterwards laid before the Commons, brought to light a strange practice. It seems that the authorized daily allowance of beer to each seaman was seven pints. It can only be presumed that those who fixed his allowance at this absurd quantity, did so with the view of his disposing of the surplus beyond his wants, and pocketing the proceeds. This, it appeared, had for some time been the custom. The purser or captain paid the seamen for the beer they did not drink: the brewer who supplied the ship paid the captain for the beer he was not required to send, and received a discharge for the full amount he had contracted to deliver. It is not improbable that poor Jack was often cheated in this arrangement; but in one respect the practice must have been beneficial to him. Since the commencement of the war most of the ships had made annual voyages to the Mediterranean, where beer could hardly have been kept, and would have been a beverage ill suited to the climate even if it were drinkable. The money

* Among Somers's Tracts is a series of papers relating to this subject.

which the seaman received in lieu of his beer enabled him to supply himself with more wholesome beverages if he pleased so to do. But the Commons were in no mood to listen to explanations. There were the ugly facts before them that several brewers had received discharges for twice the amount of beer they had actually supplied. It was resolved to request her Majesty to prosecute the guilty parties. One of them, who was a member, was promptly expelled from the House.*

So far all had proceeded according to Harley's wishes. Enough had been brought to light to engender doubts as to the conduct of those who had been lately in office. In the Lords' it had been made to appear that, while they were stinting the service in Spain to such an extent as seriously to compromise the safety of the troops, they were encouraging the generals in such bold courses as could only and did lead to disaster. In the Commons' the veil had been partially torn from their financial administration, and a chaos of debt, waste, and embezzlement had been laid open. But Harley had now almost reached the limit to which he thought it prudent to go. It did not enter into his designs to gratify the whole crowd of malignant and greedy Tories, who were crying out to kill the scotched snakes, to make an end of the villains who would have turned their country into a Republic and their countrymen into Deists or Dissenters. It was very far from his wishes that the late Ministers should be impeached, that every useful Whig who still served the sovereign should be ejected in order that his place might be enjoyed by some conceited simpleton of the right party. Yet a considerable number of members of both Houses of Parliament had come up to Westminster in the full anticipation of glutting their vindictive feelings and at the same time dropping into some lucrative and influential post. Nottingham, whose bitter intolerance on the subject of religion would have qualified him for the office of Grand Inquisitor, if any such had been at the Queen's disposal, and whose mind was teeming with projects for checking the spread of Dissent, could not understand what the new advisers were about, and began to suspect that, with all their professions, they were hypocrites

* Burnet; Boyer; Lettres Historiques. Burnet remarks that notwithstanding this vigorous procedure the abuse went on still as avowedly as ever.

and traitors to the cause at heart. He by no means stood alone in his opinions. It had been long customary for the members of a party, when some important measure was before Parliament, to meet at a tavern for the purpose of concerting a plan of action. The society was termed a club. No fee or subscription, however, was paid by those who joined it, the proprietor of the tavern being satisfied by every person discharging his reckoning for the ale or wine he consumed;. and entrance to the room was obtained simply by giving a password at the bar. In 1704 a club had been formed at the Vine by those members of Parliament who were intent on passing the bill against occasional conformity. Soon after the opening of the present session a few of the extreme Tories began to hold meetings at the Bell in Westminster. The password to their club, one easy of remembrance to a country gentleman who loved his ale, was "October." The number of persons who attended these meetings increased so rapidly that before the end of the session the October Club was said to consist of a hundred and eighty members, all of them belonging to Parliament or to the Lower House of Convocation, which was sitting at the time. The evident moderation of Harley's politics had from the first surprised, and now began to exasperate, a set of men who had expected that with a Tory Government would ensue a system of administration the reverse in most things to that which had prevailed during the period of Whig ascendancy. For four months the Parliament had been sitting: the Tories had a majority sufficient for any purpose; and yet nothing had been done to complete the ruin of the Whigs, to establish her Majesty's title firmly on the basis of hereditary right, to repress the Dissenters, or even to add to the security of the Church. It is not strange that Harley's conduct should have excited general wonder and distrust; for it was inexplicable even to his most intimate friends. Swift confessed that he could not understand it, although, as in duty bound, he exerted himself to convince others of the wisdom of his patron.* Harley was, in fact, falling fast in the estimation of the Tories, when a fortunate incident arrested for the time the decline of his popularity.

* Swift's Memoirs Relating to the Change in the Queen's Ministry.

Among the French refugees, who, from various motives, had joined the Allied Powers against their native country, was the Abbé de Bourlie. He was descended from one of the most distinguished families of the south of France; but being a younger brother had been forced into the career usually allotted to the cadets of noble houses. He entered the Church for the purpose of preserving the family benefices, although, like Richelieu, he had but little inclination for an ecclesiastical life. He soon perpetrated some offence which must have been singularly disgraceful, as with all his fondness for writing and discoursing about his achievements, he never once mentioned the cause which drove him from his country. His sensitive vanity, the resentment which a man of depraved nature feels against those towards whom he has behaved badly, and an active and ardent temperament, combined to render him a bitter enemy to France. Some daring attempts which he made in 1704 to extend the insurrection of the Cevennois were frustrated by the watchfulness of Villars. He then commenced a round of the Allied courts. The Duke of Savoy, fascinated by the brilliance and fertile invention of his visitor, recommended him as a useful servant to the English Government, and upon arriving in this country he was well received.* He had dropped his title of abbé, resumed his patronymic, and now called himself the Marquis of Guiscard. St. John, who was then Secretary at War, made him the companion of his wild orgies. Godolphin did more for him. He gave him the command of a regiment of refugees, and never failed to consult him about those projects for effecting a landing on the French coast, which at this period of the war formed a part of the plans for each year. These expeditions, however, invariably proving both abortive and costly, were at length, much to Guiscard's mortification, abandoned. It should be said, in justice to him, that their failure was owing, not to any remissness on his part, but to the lukewarmness and parsimony which the Government always displayed in every undertaking which Marlborough did not conduct in person. The difficulties of the poor adventurer to get his schemes adopted now went near to turn his brain. He kept passing and repassing between the

* For the earlier history of Guiscard see the Mémoires de St. Simon.

camp in the Netherlands and the closet of the Treasurer, submitting projects more and more visionary, and boasting of his abilities to carry them through, until both Marlborough and Godolphin were wearied, and heartily repented ever having taken him into favour. His regiment was disbanded. To compensate him for the loss of his colonelcy a pension of five hundred pounds a year was awarded him by Anne; but this, at the recommendation of the Commissioners of the Treasury, was soon reduced to four hundred. Had the pension been regularly paid—and it was not—it would have been insufficient for a man who lived the dissipated life of Guiscard. He soon fell into great poverty: he was deeply involved in debt: he was often in want of a meal. The coldness and disdain of the new Ministers convinced him that he had nothing more to expect from the English Government. In these desperate circumstances he bethought him of transferring his services to a new market. He contrived to open a correspondence with the French Ministers, and strove to inspire them with a belief that he was possessed of valuable information touching the designs of England for the ensuing campaign. His letters, however, fell into hands for which they were never intended. A warrant for the apprehension of the traitor was instantly issued, and he was arrested while walking in St. James's Park and conducted to the Cockpit for examination by the Privy Council.

The members not being yet assembled, Guiscard was first confined in one of the rooms used by the clerks. His pockets, in conformity with the usual practice, were searched, and the messengers, who had taken him into custody, then left him alone. During their absence he got possession of a penknife which he found lying upon the desk. He was brought before the Council and interrogated by his old boon companion St. John as to his correspondence with France. He appeared greatly agitated, changed colour several times, shifted from one foot to the other, and kept fumbling in his pockets. He had the assurance, however, to deny that he had entered into any communication with the French Ministers until his letters were produced. St. John then upbraided him for his treachery towards a queen from whom he was receiving a pension, and exhorted him to be sincere and make a clean breast of all he

had done. He asked permission to speak with him in private. His request was refused; and as he continued his importunities one of the Privy Councillors put his hand on the bell to summon the messengers to take him away. Then he grew frantic with rage and despair. "This is harsh usage," he exclaimed; "am I not to be allowed a word?" He strode towards Harley, who was sitting at the table, stooped down as if to whisper, and stabbed him in the breast. The blade of the penknife broke against the bone: the assassin repeated the blow, and made a rush towards St. John. There was wild confusion. St. John, crying out, "the villain has killed Mr. Harley!" drew his sword and made several passes at Guiscard. Some of the Privy Councillors followed his example. The messengers came running in, and the unhappy wretch, who tossed and writhed about like a madman, was at length thrown to the ground and secured. He implored the Duke of Ormond to despatch him; but his Grace turned coldly away. "That is not the business for a gentleman," he replied, "but for someone else." The Frenchman, already half dead from wounds and bruises, was then dragged away.*

The probability is, on a review of all the circumstances, that Guiscard, a ruined, desperate man, cursed with an excitable temperament, and foreseeing nothing before him but a traitor's doom, adopted this means to procure for himself a more gentlemanly exit from the world than by hanging. There is nothing to show that he entertained any special malice against either Harley or St. John. The circumstance of his singling out the former for his victim may be accounted for simply by Harley being the Privy Councillor who sat nearest to him. The injuries Guiscard received at the hands of the members and their servants were, however, so serious that he survived his committal to Newgate only eight days. Several attempts to elicit information from him were made by St. John and others during those intervals in which he appeared to be in possession of his senses. But he protested that he knew of no conspiracy, that he had no accomplices; and there can be little doubt that this was the truth. Occasionally he seemed

* Boyer; Lettres Historiques; Burnet and Dartmouth's Note; Swift to King, March, 1710; Narrative of Guiscard's Examination, written by Mrs. Manley.

anxious to unburthen his mind of some distressing secret; but he always stopped short, and there is every reason to believe that he was half-delirious at the time. As soon as he was dead the governor of the prison directed that the body of the friendless man should be preserved in brine, and permitted his turnkeys to earn a few shillings by exhibiting it to public curiosity. But this show, which would have disgraced a nation of savages, was speedily stopped by a royal order to inter the corpse.

The report that Harley had been stabbed by a French spy spread like wildfire through the town, with the usual accessories supplied by the imagination of the narrators. A variety of silly rumours agitated all London. A horrible plot had been discovered. An attempt had been made on the Queen's life. The Pretender was on the high seas. He had landed somewhere on the coast. The Ministers, instead of endeavouring to allay the public alarm, took such measures as increased it. The guards in and around St. James's Palace, and the patrols of the park were promptly doubled.* Harley meanwhile had been carried home. His wounds were not in themselves of a dangerous character. But as he had been out of health for some time previously his friends were not without anxiety; and during the five weeks he kept his house, his door was constantly beset by inquirers. The act of Guiscard had suddenly raised him to the glorious elevation of a martyr for his Queen, his country, and the Protestant religion.† That the assassin should have selected him for his victim out of all England was a sufficient answer to those who were trying to make out that the new Minister was but an indifferent patriot, a merely selfish politician, a lukewarm Churchman. Was it not evident that the King of France had ordered him to be taken off because he was the most able and zealous servant the Queen possessed, and the most determined enemy to the Church of Rome? The friends

* Boyer; Lettres Historiques.

† St. John remarks (March 13—24), "It is impossible to express to you the firmness and magnanimity which Mr. Harley showed upon this surprising occasion. I, who have always admired him, never did it so much. The suddenness of the blow, the sharpness of the wound, the confusion which followed, could neither change his countenance nor alter his voice." This proves that the enmity which afterwards broke out between the two Ministers, had not yet commenced.

of Harley in the Lower House were quick to take advantage of the general enthusiasm. On the day following the attempt of Guiscard, and at the time when the Minister was thought to be lying betwixt life and death, they moved and carried an address to the throne. It was presented by both Houses, and informed her Majesty that it was the opinion of the Parliament that his fidelity and zeal for her service had drawn upon him the hatred of all the abettors of Popery and faction. The Queen in her answer expressed her concurrence with this sentiment. A request that she would take all possible care of her sacred person, and as one effectual means for her safety would remove all Papists from London and Westminster, excited the usual proclamation against that unfortunate class of men.

This address had been carried without opposition. Many of the Whigs preferred to absent themselves from their seats rather than to vote upon the occasion; and they adopted the same course when Harley, upon his recovery, received the congratulations of the House through the Speaker.* During his absence a committee had been instituting a rigorous examination into the financial administration of the late Government. Their report was now presented. It was read, was taken at different times into consideration, and two resolutions were founded upon it. By one printed and published vote the country learned with a thrill of alarm and indignation that, of the moneys granted by Parliament up to Christmas, 1710, there was a sum of no less than thirty-five millions for which no accounts had been passed. By another, which seemed a natural sequence of the first, that those persons who had till recently managed the affairs of the Treasury, had committed a gross breach of trust in neglecting to compel the proper parties to pass their accounts. As nothing was made public beyond the bare votes, it was left to the charity of every man who had not the advantage of listening to such explanations as the late Ministers and their friends could offer in Parliament, to estimate how much of this vast sum had been embezzled by Godolphin, his colleagues and subordinates. It was fortunate for that statesman at this conjuncture that the world firmly believed him to be what he in fact was, a poor man. He was

* St. John to Drummond, March 13—24.

at least unattended by any of the evidences of wealth. His style of living was singularly devoid of luxury or ostentation. His passion for horse-racing, cock-fighting, and card-playing was indeed notorious; but it was also notorious that he was seldom a loser by his betting transactions, which he conducted with all the wariness and cool calculation of a professional blackleg.* But assuming the complete innocence of Godolphin, it could still only be inferred from these votes that strange laxity had prevailed during his administration, and that a host of pilferers had been encouraged by his indolence and carelessness. The tale about the thirty-five millions, which the Whigs had between them contrived to embezzle, was soon exciting the wonder of the credulous and exercising the ingenuity of all the alehouse politicians in the kingdom. It is no bad illustration of the contempt with which the intellectual and dignified leaders of the party regarded the opinions of the vulgar that, although nothing could have been easier than to set their countrymen right, upwards of a year elapsed before they condescended to tender them any explanation. It was not until 1712 that Walpole, weary of the rumours floating about to the prejudice of the late Ministers, published a pamphlet which, in the opinion of all reasonable men, satisfactorily disposed of the charges implied or seemingly implied in the resolutions. It was shown that of the thirty-five millions the accounts for all but seven millions had been given in, and only awaited the audit, a final process which the cumbrous and antiquated proceedure of the Treasury rendered a very tedious business; and that for the remaining seven millions the accounts had not at the date of the resolutions arrived from Spain and Portugal.† But the resolutions had meanwhile accomplished the object which their authors had in view. They had inspired a doubt in the public mind of the boasted integrity and commercial wisdom of that favourite Treasurer who seemed to monopolise the confidence of monied men.

About the same time that these votes were levelled at Godolphin, another vote was pointed at Sunderland. The

* He died in 1712, and, according to the Duchess, left scarcely sufficient for the expenses of his funeral. Indorsement of the Duchess on Godolphin's Letter of Dismissal,—see Coxe's Memoirs.

† See the paper in Somers's Tracts and the remarks in Burnet's History.

animosity which the Tories cherished against this nobleman exceeded that which they cherished against any other member of the Junta. There was both in his politics and in his manners a kind of defiance to public opinion which was highly provoking. In an age when the sympathies of the whole nation were intensely monarchical, it was the delight of Sunderland to affect the republican maxims and rude bearing of a Cato. In an age when the spirit of the community was decidedly conservative, Sunderland was the ardent apostle of progress. In an age when the great mass of the people was devoted to the Anglican Establishment, and set on religious persecution, Sunderland could not rest content merely with protecting the Dissenters, but notoriously desired to raise them to the same level as the orthodox Churchmen. The Act of Naturalization, which attracted to England those crowds of homeless foreigners who were popularly termed Palatines, had been, it was well known, a favourite scheme of his, and it had undoubtedly proved a very mischievous one. The grievance had indeed abated considerably during 1710. Many of the refugees had found masters: shiploads had been despatched to Ireland and America. Still, however, the number who hung about London was large enough to excite the ire and jealousy of those native paupers who considered themselves the sole legitimate objects of charity. The Tories had been always averse to the act, and had watched with alarm the swelling crowd of destitution, not so much on account of the folly of encouraging an influx of foreign beggars at a time when trade was in a depressed condition, as of the danger which threatened the Church of England. For although a Palatine might be a Protestant, he was not a Protestant after the orthodox fashion; and his presence in this country could only be regarded as an increase to the ranks of the Dissenters. The opportunity was now seized of passing a sharp censure upon the policy which the late Government had pursued in this respect. A report upon the Palatines was prepared by a special committee, and gave rise to a resolution that whoever advised their being brought over was an enemy to the Queen and the country. The October Club was much mortified that matter which might have been made grounds for impeaching Sunderland should be passed over so lightly; and a motion

was made in the House to implicate him in the censure by name. But Harley was, as usual, disinclined to go to extreme lengths against any one, and he and his friends contrived by some of those parliamentary devices in which he was eminently skilled, to elude the ferocity of the extreme members of the party.*

The passionate Toryism of the House of Commons was illustrated by another measure, which justified to some extent the gloomy forebodings of the City as to the wisdom of a Parliament elected during that fit of devotional fervour which followed the prosecution of Sacheverell. The old and cherished scheme of the party for resuming the grants of William was again brought forward. In truth, it presented some overpowering recommendations to a very large class of Englishmen. Even at this day it is difficult to avoid regretting that, not until nearly the whole of the once extensive crown lands had been lavished upon favourites, did the Parliament attain to sufficient authority to impose a check upon improvident sovereigns. At a period when the nation was groaning under an extraordinary load of taxation, it was a bitter reflection that a parcel of Dutchmen should be enjoying property which, had it been retained by the Crown and applied in aid of the national resources, might have materially contributed to lighten that load. But the thing had been done. The sovereign had never regarded such property as accrued to him by forfeiture as a public trust. No lawyer could conscientiously have disputed his right to alienate it to whom he pleased. Under such circumstances a bill to resume grants already made was, as respected the sovereign, an arbitrary assumption of power by the Parliament, and as respected the grantees, an act of despotic injustice which a Persian autocrat might have been ashamed to commit. But the hatred which the landed gentlemen bore to the Portlands and Albemarles blinded them to all other considerations. A bill to resume the grants made by the Crown since February, 1688, was introduced and passed. In it were inserted the names of Commissioners whose duty it should be to examine the value of the property granted, and the consideration for which the grant was made. The small

* Burnet; Boyer; Lettres Historiques.

probability that this duty would have been impartially fulfilled heightens the infamy of the scheme. It is not unfair to assume that the design of the promoters of this bill was not against all, but only a selection of the grantees of William. Such Tories as had tasted of the royal bounty would have been suffered to escape, while the Dutchmen and Whigs would have been despoiled without mercy. As it was anticipated that the bill would meet with but little favour from the Lords, some of the zealots endeavoured to induce the House to tack it to the lottery bill, which was then ready. But this proposition was firmly and successfully combated by that moderate section of the party which followed the lead of Harley. It does not appear that any considerable debate arose with regard to the bill in the Upper Chamber. It was promptly rejected; and its promoters were forced to forego their design for that session.*

Another act, conceived in the strongest spirit of Toryism, survived, strange to relate, through the entire period of the Georges when the Whigs were almost uniformly the predominant party, escaped the Reform Bill of 1832, and continued to be the law of the land far into the reign of Victoria. The landed gentry took advantage of their majority to pass a bill which they fondly hoped would for ever exclude the men of Change Alley from all chance of obtaining a seat in Parliament. It was laid down that an indispensable qualification of a county member should be the possession of an estate, freehold or copyhold, of the clear annual value of six hundred pounds, and that the qualification of a borough member should be a similar estate of the annual value of three hundred pounds. The returning-officer was required to administer an oath to the candidate upon his election that he held such an estate, and to certify to the House of Commons that the oath had been taken. The only exceptions to the rule were the eldest sons of peers and the members chosen by the Universities. In 1696 a similar bill had passed both Houses, but had been rejected by William. In the following year another bill to the same purpose had been thrown out by the Lords. But the composition of the Upper Chamber was now so far changed by the addition of the Scottish peers, whose interests were not affected by the bill, and

* Burnet.

whose sympathies were all on the Tory side, that the measure was again passed. It met with the ready acceptance of a sovereign incapable of discerning, like William, the mischievous tendency of a law ignoring the claims of personal property, and expressly framed with the view of confining the legislature to a class of persons generally ignorant of the principles of trade, and even affecting to despise those who made trade a pursuit. It is needless to relate how the Act practically became a dead letter, or to recount the devices by which persons notoriously disqualified contrived through a century and a half to evade the law. But it is not one of the least strange among the curiosities of English history that a law, intrinsically bad and so constantly eluded as to blunt men's consciences by the familiarity with chicane, should have been suffered to remain so long on the statute-book.

The Londoner of the nineteenth century is still surrounded by the effects of a grant of this House of Commons. From Hanover Square to Limehouse the monuments of a pious queen, a zealous clergy, and a compliant Parliament, meet his eye at every turn. Three hundred and fifty thousand pounds were accorded to her Majesty for building fifty additional churches in London and Westminster; and from this fund the successors of Wren were enabled to design and erect those remarkable edifices which now embellish the metropolis. The traveller, fresh from the rich Gothic of France, Belgium, and Germany, will no doubt discern in the severe simplicity of our ecclesiastical architecture, the emblem of that pure unadorned religion for the diffusion of which it was reared. A steeple rising above a Greek portico will be admitted by such critics as are not firmly wedded to classical prejudices to be an improvement on the Parthenon; and the lover of the Italian style will see with admiration the works which Palladio originated under a bright sky and amid the blue waters of Venice, reproduced, with the variations of independent genius, in the gloom and smoke of London.

A week after Harley's return to the House of Commons he promulgated a scheme to provide for the floating debt, which, although simple enough in its most important feature, was accepted by the Tories as the inspiration of a heaven-born

financier. It consisted in funding the debt, which amounted on one branch or another of the service to nearly nine millions and a half, at six per cent. interest. As an inducement to the creditors to accept the scheme, he proposed to incorporate them into a company with a monopoly of British trade to the South Seas. The countries to which our forefathers alluded under the general term of "the South Seas," were Peru, Chili, and Mexico, all of them Spanish possessions. They were still, in the absence of precise information about them, believed to be Eldorados. But it seems strange that the same persons who pictured them as being strewn up and down with gold and gems, which the natives were eager to exchange for cloths, tools, and glass necklaces, should have likewise imagined that Spain would be willing to admit partners in so valuable a traffic. Not a hope of any kind was held out by the Government of sending an armed expedition to drive away the Spaniards. There seems, however, to have been a vague conjecture that Harley would insist upon some arrangement with Spain touching British commerce as a condition of any treaty of peace. As regarded the national creditors the scheme was a success. Parliament and public alike were fascinated by its attractions. The bills on the Navy, which formed the principal portion of the floating debt, became at once in eager demand, recovered from the discount to which they had fallen, and the credit of the Government was said to be restored.

Amid the applause which followed the introduction of this scheme the public learned with satisfaction that the Queen had been pleased to raise its author to the peerage. A patent creating him Baron Harley of Wigmore, Earl of Oxford and Earl Mortimer, passed the Great Seal on the 24th of May. The preamble to that document is not a little remarkable. The same absurd flattery which his party lavished upon him for the purposes of faction, the same vituperation of former servants of the Crown which nothing could excuse but its being delivered in the heat of party warfare, were introduced in the solemn act ennobling himself and his posterity. It enumerated the situations he had held: it declared how he had been Speaker to three successive Parliaments and at the same time a Secretary of State, two offices which, however dis-

cordant they might seem with each other, were easily combined by one who knew so well how to reconcile monarchy with liberty; how, after an interval, he had become Chancellor of the Exchequer, and put a stop to the growing embezzlement of the public money; how he had settled a new trade to the South Seas, restored the public credit and filled the citizens with joy; how the two Houses had declared that his fidelity and affection to the national interests had exposed him to the hatred of wicked men and to the desperate rage of a villainous parricide; and how her Majesty had determined to comply with the desires of her Parliament by granting him a place among the peers. Finally it was pronounced a singular felicity that he, who was himself learned and a patron of learned men, should derive his title from a city so pre-eminent for letters. Harley was not ashamed to print and circulate this fulsome catalogue of his merits. A few days after taking his seat in the Upper House he received from Anne the Treasurer's staff. A piece of good fortune had recently befallen him. The Queen's uncle, Rochester, was now dead; and although his influence with his niece had never been great, it was considered that his removal from the scene secured Oxford the monopoly of the royal confidence.

CHAPTER IX.

THE summer was now far advanced, and the session drew to a close. One of the last acts of the Commons was to carry up to the throne a series of strictures upon the late Ministers in the form of a representation of the state of the nation. In this document, which was published and industriously dispersed throughout the kingdom, they related the many bad practices which they had detected in the conduct of the preceding Administration, the borrowing of money without consent of Parliament, the diversion of monies granted for one service to the use of another, the irregularities which had been permitted in the victualling of the navy, the neglect to compel the proper officers to pass their accounts. "Your people," the framers of the representation concluded by informing Anne, "could perhaps have borne with patience the injuries inflicted upon themselves by the frauds and depredations of such evil ministers, had not the same men proceeded to treat your sacred person with undutifulness and disregard." The speech with which the Queen on the 12th of June prorogued the Parliament amounted to an emphatic approval of all that had been done during the session. One of its sentences excited some comment. Her Majesty repeated the assurance she had made at the opening of the Parliament of her earnest concern for the succession of the House of Hanover. During the entire period of Godolphin's Administration and the ascendancy of the Whigs, the Ministers seem to have considered it unnecessary to introduce any reference to the House of Hanover in the royal orations. But with the first Parliament containing a majority of Tories, and presided over by a Tory Ministry, her Majesty felt herself compelled, although at some sacrifice to dignity, to speak out plainly. Her assurances on this subject amounted, in fact, to

an acknowledgment of the distrust which the changes in her Government had inspired in the minds of her subjects as to her intentions of promoting the fulfilment of that law of succession which had been enacted eleven years back.

Yet these misgivings as to the succession appear to have been nearly confined to the Whigs. There can be no doubt that the new Ministry had during the session advanced considerably in the esteem and confidence of the nation. At the commencement some scruples had existed in a large portion of the public which looked with little favour upon the Whigs as a party, as as to the expediency of a change of Government at such a time. A lustre of glory had hitherto surrounded the Whigs, which even those who most bitterly hated the religious and political doctrines they were supposed to hold, could not avoid respecting. The system which William introduced, and the Whigs, as his political executors carried on, of organizing the Powers of Europe against France, had been crowned with success. Blenheim and Ramilies, Oudenarde and Malplaquet had been added to the stock of national pride. Could it be prudent to dismiss those Ministers whose whole hearts were in the war, just at the time when France was succumbing, when one more vigorous effort would almost infallibly win a triumphant peace? Would Tories forget their old antipathies to foreign wars and set themselves earnestly to carry to a successful issue the plans originated by their rivals? Would a new Ministry be able to exercise the magical wand with which Godolphin could raise money at any time and in any sums? Above all, would the great soldier whose sword seemed to be indispensable to his country, remain a patient witness of the dismissal of his relations and friends from office, of the substitution of those who had undermined them in their room, and continue his exertions on behalf of an ungrateful Queen and people? Such doubts and scruples had qualified the satisfaction with which a large section of the public regarded the Tory reaction in 1710. Before the Parliament broke up all doubts had disappeared. Marlborough had pocketed his affronts with Christian meekness, and appeared willing to remain for ever in the service of a country which paid him so well. The triumphant party had given the best proof of its determination to support

the war by grants as liberal as had ever been voted by a Whig majority. Harley had caught up the magical wand of Godolphin and endowed it with additional powers. Public credit was restored. Stocks were fast recovering from their depression. In truth, the respect which the former Government had inspired was now dashed with suspicion. Good sound Churchmen and patriots, it was said, had looked into their administration, and found the finances all in disorder. It was probable enough that the country had been systematically plundered by the very men whose wisdom, integrity and acquaintance with commercial affairs had been so highly extolled. With the close of the session Swift concluded the series of weekly essays which he contributed to the *Examiner*. He could then congratulate himself that his object had been fully accomplished, and that a great majority of the nation was at length convinced of the wisdom of the Queen in changing her Ministry and Parliament.*

Harley had steered his way through all difficulties with considerable adroitness. The abilities of this man were once extravagantly praised. It seems now too much the fashion to underrate them. There were doubtless in his stolid countenance, the solemn importance of his manner, his habit of making a mystery of every trifle, his confused way of speaking, and his heavy attempts to emulate the vivacity of St. John and the gaiety of Prior, little of the externals either of a courtier or a statesman. Yet Harley contrived to insinuate himself into the esteem of Anne; and was also successful, as far at least as his own advantage was concerned, as a politician. It may be questioned whether any Minister ever showed a nicer discernment of men and parties than he exhibited during the period immediately following the change of Government. Every measure of the Parliament of 1710 was, in spite of opposition from all quarters, fashioned according to the bent he wished to give it. He contrived to blast the reputation of the Whigs, yet at the same time to leave open a door of reconciliation with them by restraining the Tories from any useless and pernicious persecution. He managed to prevent the High Church zealots from passing laws which he saw would infallibly, as the national fervour cooled,

* See No. 45 of the *Examiner*.

bring the whole party into contempt. And in this policy of moderation his only ally of any note seems to have been the Secretary, Dartmouth.* Nottingham, the most influential Tory of the Upper House, disgusted at being baulked in his schemes of piety and revenge, soon declared himself an enemy. St. John, the greatest orator of the Lower Chamber, broke away from subordination to a leader whom he despised as a mere pompous plodder, and evinced his restlessness, sometimes by haranguing in favour of the Whigs, and then supporting the extrême Tories.† The Minister who could overcome difficulties of so many kinds, could scarcely have been the mere puzzle-headed man he has been represented.

One point he from the first saw clearly. It was absolutely necessary to make an end of the war, or his administration would be soon obnoxious to the same reproaches which the nation was now casting upon the former Ministers. If armies and fleets were to be continued upon their present colossal scale, and if princes all round Europe were to be perpetually subsidized, it was plain that a revenue of five or six millions would no more suffice to a Tory Government than it had already sufficed to the Whigs. The report must soon burst upon an indignant country, that the same men who had taught it to cry shame upon the extravagance of their predecessors were following in their footsteps. The means of bringing about a peace seem to have been debated from the outset of the administration.‡ Upon one subject all the members of the conclave were united in opinion. As long as the negotiations were permitted to remain in the hands of the Dutch, with Marlborough and the Whigs behind the scenes as prompters, no satisfactory result was likely to ensue. It was necessary therefore that a communication should be opened directly with the French Ministers; but to avoid exciting alarm in those Governments, and that host of persons who were interested in prolonging the war, that the communication should be made with the greatest possible secrecy. The Earl of Jersey was the first to propose a plan for compassing this object.

* Dartmouth's affection for Harley is apparent in all his notes to Burnet's History.

† Speaker Onslow's Note to Burnet.

‡ See Bolingbroke's Correspondence and Swift's Various Political Writings.

There was in London a French priest named Gaultier. He had come over in the suite of Tallard upon the occasion of his embassy in 1698, and had ever since remained in the country, earning his livelihood by officiating as chaplain in the houses of different Roman Catholic families. Tallard had, at parting, recommended him to correspond, as opportunity offered, with the French Government, but to run no risk of being set down as a spy; and the Abbé had acted with so much prudence that, notwithstanding a frequent interchange of letters between Torcy and himself, he had never fallen under suspicion.* Jersey, in whose family he had for some time resided, mentioned him to Harley as a man exactly adapted for the sort of business required. His character was without reproach, his abilities were good, and he had the essential recommendation of being so little known to the public that he might be sent on any mission without attracting notice. Accordingly, in January, 1711, Gaultier, after receiving some verbal instructions from Harley and those few persons who were in the secret, stole over to Nieuport, sent forward a letter to Torcy requesting an audience, followed his messenger to Versailles, and was at once ushered into the chamber of the Minister. His first words not a little astonished that astute but despairing statesman. "Do you want peace?" he said. "I am come to enable you to obtain it independently of the Dutch, who are unworthy of the honour, which his Majesty has so frequently designed for them, of being the pacificators of Europe." Torcy was lost in amazement. Such an offer proceeding from England was too good to be true. He suspected that some trick was intended. To ask a Minister of his Majesty at such a time whether he desired peace, was, as he many years later confessed in his memoirs, like asking a man sinking under a fatal disorder whether he wished to recover. Gaultier proceeded to inform him that, if his Majesty would renew his negotiations with the Dutch and should succeed in reopening conferences for a peace, the English Ministers would take care that those conferences should be attended by ambassadors charged with such instructions as would effectually

* On the 10th July, 1710, Torcy directed him to gain over, if possible, the Duke and Duchess of Shrewsbury and the new favourite.—Mackintosh, Collections.

prevent the envoys from the States from acting as they had hitherto done.*

Torcy acquainted his Majesty and his fellow Ministers with this proposal. The opinion of the majority was that a man, almost totally unknown, and who dropped, as it were, from the clouds, with an improbable story in his mouth, for which he could produce not a line of credentials, was unworthy of serious attention. It was urged that his Majesty could not, without a deplorable sacrifice of dignity, renew his advances to a people who had, in return for his previous condescensions, treated him with unparalleled asperity and insolence. Both Louis and Torcy, however, influenced perhaps by their ardent desire for peace, were more disposed to consider the words of Gaultier as being a genuine overture on the part of the English Ministers. What he asked for, moreover, did not amount to much; and, contrary to the usual practice of impostors, he made no demand for money. He required nothing beyond a letter of vague compliments addressed to Lord Jersey. If such a letter were furnished him, he remarked, it would pledge his Majesty to nothing. The English Ministers would, however, understand, when they saw it, that his Majesty was willing to put himself in communication with them. Louis, convinced that no harm could result from such an innocent proceeding, complied with Gaultier's request, and about the same time that Marlborough was preparing to embark on his tenth and last campaign against France, the Abbé was speeding back to England with a letter signed by the Secretary of State, of which the contents were that that functionary was glad to hear that my Lord Jersey was in good health, and begged to be remembered to him through the bearer.*

The great Englishman took his departure at an early season of the year, glad to take refuge from the pitiless sarcasms of Tory wits and the insidious civilities of Tory Ministers in a country where the leading men were all his sincere friends, and in an army where he was adored by every degree of rank, from the colonels to the drummers. Amid his numerous causes of vexation he had some sources of consolation. He had received the most solemn assurances both from the Queen and the

* Mémoires de Torcy. † Mémoires de Torcy.

Ministers that the remittances for the pay of his troops should be forwarded with the same punctuality as when the Treasury was controlled by Godolphin. He had been also relieved from the presence of his bitter enemy Argyle, who had been appointed to the command of the troops in Spain. At the Hague he remained until nearly the end of April, engaged in the hopeless task of composing disputes between the northern potentates, trying to soothe the King of Prussia, who was, as usual, protesting that, unless the States paid him his money, his soldiers should be marched home, and entreating the German Ministers to stir up the circles of the Empire to send their contingents in time. On his road to the army he received intelligence of incalculable importance. The smallpox had hurried off the Emperor Joseph.* He left no male issue, and the successor upon whom the suffrages of the electors seemed likely to fall was his brother Charles, the same prince for whom the Allied Powers had been so long striving to secure the crown of Spain.

It appears strange that an incident which, in reality, threw an entirely new complexion over the interests involved in the war should have wrought at the time no apparent change in the sentiments of most of the English and Dutch statesmen. The avowed object of the contest was to restore the balance of power in Europe, which was thought, by Philip's acquisition of the Spanish dominions, to incline too much in favour of France. In 1700 the aspect of affairs was such as might well cause uneasiness to the Dutch, and in a less degree also to the English. Philip was a feeble and dependent youth, accustomed to pay the most implicit obedience to his grandfather. The whole line of seaboard from the frontier of Holland to Gibraltar would, it was considered, be virtually under the control of one ambitious, unscrupulous, energetic despot. But ten years had produced a great difference. It was plain to all who did not obstinately shut their eyes to facts that Louis had had enough of fighting for the rest of his life. Even the resources of his magnificent kingdom were drying up. His spirits seemed to be broken both by public and domestic calamities. He was willing to offer the most ample guarantees for his future good

* 17th April, 1711.

behaviour—a strong barrier to the Dutch and important concessions to the other Allies. His great age, moreover, rendered it impossible that he could reign much longer, and when he died the Duke of Burgundy would succeed him. The thrones of France and Spain would then be enjoyed by two brothers, whose personal characters, a consideration of no little importance in absolute sovereigns, promised anything rather than a repetition of the career of Louis XIV.; and as time rolled on the degree of relationship between the monarchs of the two kingdoms would grow wider and wider.

It may seem, therefore, that in 1710 the crown of Spain might have been abandoned to Philip with little danger of any harm resulting. But with the commencement of 1711 occurred an incident which rendered the course which the Whigs and a party in Holland were bent on pursuing with reference to the Spanish dominions one decidedly impolitic. Joseph died, and Charles became Emperor. If Spain were conquered and made over to him, his power, so far as extent of territory may be said to constitute power, would equal that of Charles V. The preponderance in Europe would simply be transferred from the House of Bourbon to the House of Hapsburg, and with this additional evil. As matters stood the two thrones would be occupied by separate princes; and however close might be their relationship, their interests and wills might and probably would differ on many essential points. But if the Spanish dominions were given to Charles, more than a moiety of civilized Europe would be obedient to the will of one man. And it was impossible to predict how long this state of things might continue. No separation of sovereignties might ensue, as upon the death of Charles V. The present Emperor, a weak and voluptuous being, seemed unlikely to give much trouble, but his successor might be a very different kind of person.

These reflections seem not to have occurred to or at least not to have been sufficiently pondered either by Marlborough, the Whigs, or the Dutch statesmen. But there can be no doubt that the Tory Ministers at once regarded the accession of Charles to the Empire as adding a powerful argument on public grounds to those private reasons which had already determined them to use their efforts to effect a peace. Spain, as one of the

objects of contention, they were willing to give up. The difficulties in the way of conquering that kingdom had always been formidable. After the recent disastrous campaign they might well appear insurmountable; and now it had become very questionable whether, even if the design could be accomplished, it was a wise one. They ventured to convey to the Parliament a hint of their pacific intentions. The Queen, in communicating to the Houses the news of the Emperor's death, announced that she designed to employ her influence in promoting the succession of the King of Spain to the vacant dignity, and expressed a hope that, with the assistance of her Parliament, she should be able to bring the war to a happy conclusion by a safe and honourable peace. How the succession of Charles to the Imperial crown could be the means of bringing about a peace must have been an enigma to most minds. But it does not appear that this significant coupling of the two subjects occasioned any debate in either House.

May had arrived before Marlborough found himself in a position to take the field. The ablest of the French marshals had been again selected to oppose him, and Villars had omitted no precautions to ensure the safety of those few remaining fortresses which still protected the frontier of France. During the winter his men had been working at another long series of lines which stretched from Namur to the sea-coast. At every point the progress of the Allies southward was barred by a river, a canal, a marsh, or a fortified embankment; and in front of Cambrai, ready to turn towards any part of the lines which might be threatened, was stationed the French army. Villars himself, now restored to perfect health, was in excellent spirits, and overflowed with conceit and confidence. He foresaw, what indeed happened, that the death of the Emperor would compel the Allies to detach a force into Germany to insure the election of Charles; and he joyfully boasted to a trumpet of Marlborough's that he expected this campaign to be the stronger by thirty thousand men. But he did not anticipate what also came to pass, that he himself would be called upon to make a detachment. Before the opening of the campaign he made a tour of inspection among the towns. At St. Omer his attention was drawn to a weak point in the fortifications. "Fortifica-

tions!" he replied, "we need not trouble our heads about them any longer. Those who will need them now are his Majesty's enemies."* A characteristic speech, in which he alluded to his lines as the *non plus ultra* of the Allies, obtained a wide circulation until Marlborough broke into them and laid siege to Bouchain.

Eugene, whose assistance at this conjuncture had scarcely been expected, reached the camp about the middle of May. It was a common supposition that the two generals were burning to achieve some splendid victory which might rekindle the public enthusiasm, and dissipate those inclinations to peace which appeared to be gaining ground both in Holland and England. It was known that both were out of favour at their respective courts; and it was therefore surmised that both were personally interested in prolonging a war upon which their pre-eminence depended. But six weeks passed, and nothing of moment occurred. The rival armies lay face to face with only the narrow stream of the Sanzet between their outposts. A truce having been established by common though tacit consent, the officers contracted the habit of strolling along the banks of the rivulet and holding conversations across the water. At one of these promenades Villars appeared, accompanied by a young man of noble and dignified mien, upon whom many high-born Englishmen cast their eyes with mingled curiosity and compassion. It was the personage who at the Court of France bore the title of King of England, and whom the Marshal, in his friendly zeal for the unfortunate Prince, could not refrain from exhibiting to his revolted subjects. Marlborough grew uneasy at the interest which the Pretender excited in his officers, and intimated a wish to Villars that these promenades should be discontinued.† He himself was in the habit of sending, as opportunity offered, messages of comfort to the exiled family. In letters never intended to meet the public eye, and to agents who he trusted would be dumb, the Duke professed himself a fervid Jacobite, full of remorse for the past, and on the watch for every chance of restoring his hereditary sovereign. But these professions were purely hypocritical, and probably made with the double object of

* Lettres Historiques. † Mémoires de Villars.

providing for his own safety in case, through some Tory machinations, the Stuarts should recover their throne, and of keeping the family quiet by deluding them with false hopes that their restoration could be peaceably effected. As far as his influence could reach, it was constantly exerted in favour of the succession of the Hanoverians.

Before midsummer, both armies had been considerably weakened. Much to his mortification, and against his energetic remonstrance, Villars was compelled to send a detachment to Alsace. He could not penetrate what his master's design could be. If it were determined, he argued, to oppose the election of Charles to the Empire, the wisdom was apparent of sending not a small force but as large an army as could be mustered into Germany. But it was folly to reduce the army of the Netherlands by a body of men just sufficient to destroy all hopes of a victory in Flanders, and yet insufficient to turn the scale elsewhere. The lapse of a year or two put mankind in possession of a clue to the mysterious action of the French king. His hopes of effecting a peace by the agency of the English Ministers were rising fast. The gasconades of Villars set him trembling with apprehension lest that ardent commander should make good his promises, and achieve some success over the Allied arms, which would have the effect of reviving a warlike spirit among the English and Dutch. A victory at this critical season was, he considered, as much to be dreaded as a reverse. What he desired was, that the campaign should be unproductive of any important incidents; and the best way, he considered, of effecting his wishes, as the Marshal was not to be acquainted with the circumstance that negociations were in progress, was to deprive him of the means of doing harm.

As soon as it was known that a detachment had left the French army, Eugene separated himself from his colleague, and marched off with the Imperial troops to watch its motions. Marlborough, although not trusted by the Ministers at home, seems not to have been in the same profound ignorance as to what was passing between the Courts of London and Paris as his adversary. He felt keenly the degradation of his position. It was idle to go on forming plans and risking the lives of his soldiers each day in executing them, if the Governments

of England and France had already come to an understanding with regard to a peace. He at length determined to make a direct appeal to Oxford, and for this purpose dispatched from the camp his friend Lord Stair to confer with that Minister. The security of the Grand Alliance, the great objects for which so much blood and treasure had been expended, his emissary was charged to say, were seriously imperilled while the command of the troops remained in the hands of a general who had lost her Majesty's confidence. A commander possessed of that essential requisite, would be more competent than he to conduct the war to a glorious termination. He was ready to resign at any moment; and his prayers and his influence should be employed to promote the designs of his successor. But if it was thought for the public advantage that he should continue in his station, he must stipulate for a restoration of that good understanding upon which he had formerly lived with the Queen and her Ministers, and without which his efforts for the public welfare must be paralyzed. He then proceeded to unfold his plans for the war. His design was to obtain Bouchain and Quesnoy before the close of the campaign, and the next year to be early in the field and lay siege to Arras and Cambrai. Those fortresses in the power of the Allies there would be nothing to prevent them from marching into the interior of France, and dictating their conditions of peace under the walls of Paris.*

Oxford, with the terms of peace already half-arranged with the French Government, pretended to be overwhelmed with grief at the suspicions which his Grace had conceived. He listened with admirable gravity to the plans submitted, and professed his anxiety to promote them with all his ability. Finally, he bade Stair return to the Duke, and assure him that, come what might, he would never do anything that might cost him his good opinion.†

Partly reassured by the accounts which Stair gave upon his return, Marlborough proceeded to carry out his plans. His army, after the withdrawal of Eugene, was somewhat weaker

* Coxe's Memoirs. His authority is a letter from Stair to Lord Marchmont, 10th December, 1734.

† Oxford to Marlborough, August 4—15.

than that of Villars; but the Marshal showed no signs of a disposition to emerge from his entrenchments, and these, while he remained at hand to guard them, appeared well-nigh impregnable. The Duke exerted all his invention. His movements during the last week of July and the first week of August have been regarded by competent judges as affording some of the best proofs of his military genius. He permitted the enemy to obtain some trifling advantages. He then retired to a considerable distance, followed by Villars, who, however, still kept cautiously within his lines. The Duke appeared to be unwontedly ruffled by the reverses he had sustained. He declared his determination to attack the entrenchments with so much heat that those about him began to fear that mortifications and insults had rendered him desperate. Upon the morning of the 4th of August, he drew out his army in order of battle, rode along the lines, and, addressing the colonels, pointed with his cane to those parts of the enemy's works against which they were to lead their regiments. The day passed in a fever of excitement and expectation. In the ranks of the Allies another attack still more sanguinary and still more questionable in its hopes of success than that in which thousands of brave men had shed their blood like water at Malplaquet, was looked forward to, not indeed with fear, but with terrible forebodings of failure. Villars, on the other hand, not doubting but that the political difficulties of Marlborough had determined him to stake everything upon the chance of achieving a victory, concentrated his forces and awaited the onset behind his fortifications with a well-grounded confidence in the result. But the night drew on, and the signal of battle had not been given. While the drums were beating the tattoo, an order passed round to strike the tents. Before ten, the whole army was in motion to the left, the Duke riding in front with a body of cavalry. The march was kept up throughout the night. The ranks grew thin from the numbers who sank on the ground, exhausted with the fatigue of plodding through the heavy fields; but the majority, cheered by the hope that some brilliant result of their labours was at hand, held manfully on. By sunrise the advanced guard reached the Scarpe at Vitry, and there encountered a messenger from Cadogan, always the

leader in the execution of a great design. He and Hompesch, with twelve thousand troops, who had been quietly detached from the camp while both armies were absorbed in the expectation of a battle, had found a portion of the lines between Bouchain and Cambrai almost abandoned of defenders, and had entered without the loss of a man. Marlborough sent messages to the rear to accelerate the march of the infantry and to collect the stragglers. He himself pushed forward with the cavalry. By eight on the morning of the 5th, the greater part of the horse had effected an entrance; and two or three hours later the columns of infantry were streaming through those lines which Villars had declared to be the *non plus ultra* of the Allies.*

The Marshal had received early intelligence that the Allied army was moving off to the left. But the reports of his spies for some days past had established so complete a conviction in his mind that Marlborough was bent upon attacking him, that he at first set down this movement merely to a change of dispositions. Too late the real object of his adversary flashed across his mind. Leaving his infantry to follow him with their best speed, he set off with his cavalry, and rode so furiously in the direction of Cambray that only a few of his escort could keep up with him. At dawn he was near enough to the scene of the irruption to perceive what had occurred; but in his anxiety to learn the worst, he pushed on until he nearly fell into the hands of the advanced guard.† By the morning of the 7th, the French infantry had reached the spot. Both armies were again in presence with only a marsh between them, and it seemed as if a battle must ensue. Marlborough summoned a council of war, and declared himself to be against fighting. He had without loss obtained an advantage which would not have been thought dearly purchased at the cost of several thousand lives, and he was anxious to reap the fruit of it by laying siege to Bouchain. Villars, it was true, was no longer protected by entrenchments. But to attack him would be to set at hazard an advantage already gained; and the consequences of a defeat would be ruinous. The men, moreover, were

* Kane's Campaigns; Lettres Historiques; Campagne de Flandre.
† Mémoires de Villars; Campagne de Flandre.

out of condition by their almost unexampled march of thirty-six miles in sixteen hours. He therefore turned aside, crossed the Scheldt, and drew lines of circumvallation round Bouchain.*

The siege of that town, although in itself not a very considerable fortress, and garrisoned by only four thousand men, took up six weeks. The hearts of the defenders were sustained by the sight of the whole French army, which from the ramparts might be seen stretched along the horizon beyond the fortified ring of the besieging force. So near, in fact, were the outposts of the two armies that the sentinels could converse with each other. Villars, deeply mortified at being out-manœuvred, exerted all his skill to interrupt the operations of the Allies, and occasionally succeeded in throwing succours into the town. But his efforts could not avert the catastrophe. Upon the 14th of September he caught a distant view of the garrison marching out of Bouchain as prisoners of war.† Sanguine as was his temperament he could have little imagined that the decree of fate had gone forth, and that this was the last humiliation which France was destined to suffer.

During the campaign the negotiations between the English and French Ministers had made rapid progress. The information brought back by Gaultier had satisfied the former of the willingness of Louis to come to an arrangement with them; and the Abbé was again despatched with instructions to draw from him some definite proposals to serve as the basis of a treaty. He was charged to express a hope on the part of his employers that the conditions to be submitted to them would not be less advantageous than those already submitted to the Dutch. But Louis rightly judged that affairs had assumed a widely different appearance to that which they bore a year ago, when he was reduced to implore the authorities at the Hague to listen to the proposals of his plenipotentiaries. The position of his grandson in Spain had then been precarious; now it was assured. A simple province in the Peninsula was all that remained under the power of the Allies. With the exception

* Marlborough was censured by several statesmen for neglecting this opportunity of attacking the French army. "In reply, Sir," he says in a letter to Zinzendorf, "to your inquiry into the motives which induced me not to engage the enemy, I could answer in one word, impossibility."

† Mémoires de Villars; Campagne de Flandre; Lettres Historiques.

of the people of Catalonia, the Spaniards had evinced an enthusiasm for the cause of Philip which afforded good hopes that they would maintain his throne against the utmost efforts of his enemies. It had become evident that he was the king of their hearts, and scarcely needed the assistance of the French arms to maintain him in his position. The cruelty and absurdity of the Allies in insisting that the King of France should undertake the work of tearing his grandson from the affections of a nation were never so apparent as now.

But the confidence of Louis was not founded solely upon the improvement which had taken place in the affairs of Philip. It was manifest that a change at least as fortunate for the French interest had occurred in England. The application to himself of the new Ministers was in itself a proof of this revolution. Louis and his counsellors had been often puzzled to account for the strange, pertinacious bitterness which the Parliament evinced against France. To them it seemed incredible that England should year after year put forth her whole strength, sow the Continent all round with gold, meekly submit to be cheated and insulted by a crowd of greedy and unscrupulous princes who professed to be her Allies, and in a word act as if her existence depended upon the issue of the struggle, merely for the sake of preserving the balance of power in Europe. In their ignorance of the doctrines of different parties, and with the tendency natural to those who live under an absolute monarchy to regard every system of policy as the emanation of one controlling mind, they surmised that some great person must be at the bottom of this unnatural state of things. Formerly the stirrer up of England against France had been the Prince of Orange. He was now dead: but it was evident that his spirit survived. His mantle must have descended upon some one, who assuredly was not the good-natured, unambitious, pacific Anne. Was this great person, this evil genius of France instigated by an honest desire of promoting the military glory of his country, or did he prolong the war merely for the sake of the power and emoluments it gave him? It would be interesting to learn how often the expediency of offering a bribe to Marlborough was discussed in the French council. But this much is clear, that

a general suspicion prevailed that he was the prompter of every public man, both in England and Holland, who clamoured for the ruin and degradation of France, and that it was he who thwarted every attempt of his Majesty to procure peace. But Marlborough was no longer supreme; and from the hour of his decline in the royal favour a great change had come over the spirit of the English Government. It was plain that the new Ministers were not, like the former Ministers, mere mouthpieces of his. They appeared to be as desirous of concluding a peace as was his Majesty himself. The King now might save his bribe, and still procure better conditions than what he would a year back have been willing to purchase for a considerable sum.*

In the memorial, therefore, which was delivered to Gaultier for transmission to the English Ministers, Louis resumed that lofty and imperious tone which he had formerly employed when the liberties of Europe lay at his feet; but which for many disastrous years he had laid aside for a more humble style. Although, it was stated, his Majesty was undoubtedly in a condition to maintain the war with glory, he was willing to afford fresh proofs to the world of his sincere desire to re-establish the repose of Europe. With this view he was ready to treat for peace upon the basis of the six articles which he now submitted. The most remarkable point in the memorial is that it contained not a word which indicated any intention on the King's part to admit even a compromise with Charles upon the subject of the Spanish dominions. A hope was simply expressed that expedients might be found to content all the parties who were interested. To the English his Majesty promised his assistance to procure them privileges for exercising their commerce in Spain, the West Indies, and the ports of the Mediterranean; and to the Dutch such a barrier against French ambition as should be to the liking of the English.†

And now the Ministers were under the necessity of taking a perilous step. Hitherto they had kept the negotiations a

* The Mémoires de Torcy leave us in no doubt that such was the opinion entertained of Marlborough at the French Court. And as Torcy's only communications with Englishmen were with the Tories it is very probable that his notions concerning the hero remained uncorrected to the hour of his death.

† This memorial is printed in the Appendix to the Parliamentary History, vol. 7.

strict secret. If the notion ever crossed their minds of advising the Queen to conclude a separate peace without the privity of her Allies, it must have been speedily dismissed. If such men as Oxford and St. John were not deterred from such a course by the stain which it would bring upon the honour and good faith of their country, they knew well that they would have to answer for it with their lives to an indignant Parliament when a reaction of popular feeling should bring the Whigs again into the ascendant. It was decided therefore to communicate the proposals of the French king to Heinsius, a caution being first administered to him to keep them as much as possible to himself, and above all from the knowledge of Marlborough. The memorial was in consequence sent to Lord Raby, a diplomatist who had been for many years at the Court of Berlin, and who was then British ambassador at the Hague. The Pensionary read it with vexation and disgust, which he did not conceal, and Raby so far sympathised, or affected to sympathise, with his indignation, that St. John thought it advisable to convert him to a more convenient frame of mind by the offer of a peerage. His Lordship became Earl of Strafford, and thenceforth an accommodating ally of the Ministers.*

The feelings of Heinsius are not difficult of comprehension. For more than two years he and his countrymen had been enjoying the exquisite pleasure of tyrannizing in their turn over that wicked and rapacious monarch who had formerly been their oppressor. The intolerable harshness of their demands and their dilatory method of conducting business might almost excite a suspicion that the negotiations were purposely prolonged for the enjoyment they afforded. It was not to be borne that the pleasure of negotiating with Louis should be snatched from them by the English without making an effort to retain it in their hands. The useful Petcum was again called into requisition. Soon after the communication of the memorial to Heinsius, that active intermediary wrote to Torcy urging that the King of France should apply for a renewal of the conferences which had been so unhappily broken off at Gertruydenburg. His Majesty, it was stated in earnest language, should this time have every reason to be satisfied with the

* St. John to Lord Raby, April 27, May 7, and several letters following.

Dutch; indeed, he had but to propose his own terms, and the States would, no doubt, agree to them. It was useless for him to try to conclude anything with the English. Rival parties in that nation were perpetually pulling each other down; and what was done by one administration, however just and reasonable it might be, was always liable to be denounced and repudiated by a succeeding administration.* But Petcum's arguments were ineffectual. The wounds which the Dutch had inflicted upon the proud spirit of the great monarch were still green; and he declined to treat with them again. But there remained this satisfaction upon the mind of Louis, to find the two nations which, only a year since, had gone hand in hand to humiliate and degrade him, now bidding against each other for his favour.

Rumours of this application on the part of the Dutch reached England, and alarmed not a little the intending pacificators of Europe. From the close of April, when the secret of the negotiation was imparted to Heinsius, to the middle of July, the English Ministers did nothing more than drop an occasional hint to the French Government that they knew of these overtures from the Dutch, and express a hope that his Majesty would honourably adhere to his engagements with themselves. The determined rejection of Petcum's solicitations at length put them at ease on this point, and the negotiations proceeded. It was now thought advisable to associate with the obscure priest who had hitherto acted as their sole agent, a person of some reputation in the world. Oxford bethought him of his friend, possibly to some extent his dependant, Matthew Prior. Ten years had elapsed since the ingenious author of the "Town and Country Mouse" shone in society as secretary to successive embassies at the Hague and in France, as a Commissioner of Trade, and finally as member for East Grinstead in the last Parliament of William. How the Tory man of letters passed through the long dreary interval when all the patronage of the State was monopolised by the Whigs, we are not informed. But flattery was a marketable ware in those days; and the poems of Prior evince much skill and little scrupulousness in its manufacture. It was presumed that he would be remembered

* Mémoires de Torcy.

by the French statesmen, whose acquaintance he had made in his former days of importance. But very little latitude was at first given him for the exercise of his judgment. He was simply entrusted with a memorial of the demands of the English Government, and authority from the Queen to receive his Majesty's answers. He and Gaultier accordingly repaired to Dover, crept over to Calais in a hired fishing-boat, and then proceeded under fictitious names to the Court at Fontainebleau.

Torcy, whose recollections of the gay and clever secretary of the English embassy were of the most agreeable character, gave Prior a flattering reception. The memorial containing the English demands, of which he was the bearer, was then examined. Upon one point, the King had every reason to be pleased. There was no mention of that odious condition that Philip should relinquish Spain and its dependencies, which had hitherto rendered all negotiation abortive. All that the English Ministers required on that subject was some security that the crowns of France and Spain should never be united on the same head. It did not appear, however, that, upon other points, they were disposed to be romantically generous. Torcy grew more and more alarmed as he perused a list of demands in favour of British commerce, the granting of which must infallibly, as he thought, throw the trade of the whole world into British hands. One demand was that the subjects of her Majesty should be treated by Spain upon an equal footing with the most favoured nations. This was obviously designed, in the first place, to exclude the Dutch from all participation in the American trade. But it would also have the effect of depriving France of those commercial advantages which, she might well consider, ought to result from her near connection with the Spanish king; and the probability was great that England, with her superior wealth and her surpassing skill and experience in business, would soon drive out of the field the feeble rivalry of the French merchants. Another requirement was that the valuable contract for supplying the plantations with negroes, which was then in the hands of a French company, should be transferred to England, together with some seaports for the convenience of landing and selling those articles of merchandise. Newfoundland and Hudson's Bay, or such

parts of them as were in the possession of the French, were also demanded by the English Ministers. Spain was required to cede Gibraltar and Port Mahon to the English Crown. The destruction of Dunkirk, the demolition of its fortifications, the filling up of its harbour were conditions too dear to the mercantile interest of Great Britain to be omitted in any treaty of peace. It seemed therefore that the English Ministers were not so anxious for peace as to indispose them to drive a hard bargain. It was indeed evident that Oxford and his colleagues, aware of the ferment which would be excited by their abandoning Spain to Philip, and forecasting what would happen when the Whigs again succeeded to power, had determined to get public opinion on their side by promoting the commercial interests of their country. One part of the memorial had reference to the demands which the other members of the Confederacy were entitled to make. But on this subject the Ministers expressed their views in very general terms, and merely stipulated that barriers should be afforded to Holland, the Empire, and Savoy.

In more than one interview with Torcy, and perhaps also in the presence of Louis himself, Prior contended with much zeal for the pretensions put forward by the English in favour of their commerce. The nation had, he said, been at great expense in the war, and looked to the American trade to recoup their losses. He disclaimed all intention on their part of injuring the trade of any other nation. But they did wish, he confessed, to break down the monopoly which the Spaniards had enjoyed and misused for centuries. The Catholic king, out of the immense extent of his dominions between California and the Straits of Magellan, could very easily spare a few harbours to the English, who would employ them to their own profit and the general advantage of mankind; and he was able to say that, if France thought fit to follow so good an example and obtain a few ports for herself, this would not displease her Majesty. The Austrian prince, whom the Queen had hitherto supported at such cost, had promised, when he was in possession of the Spanish Crown, to treat the English upon the same footing with his own subjects. Surely then her Majesty, for consenting to abandon the cause of Charles, with all its prospective advantages, was entitled to some compensation from

Philip. The weakness of this last argument must have brought a smile on Torcy's countenance. It was very well for a man to promise a good interest in a bear's skin to those who were to catch and kill the bear for him; and such was Charles's position. But the Allies had not succeeded in catching the bear. For eight years they had been labouring to drive Philip out of Spain; and the only result of their efforts was that he was now more firmly established in the country than ever. It was a little too much then for her Majesty to expect compensation for her kindness in retiring from an expensive and hopeless enterprise.

Upon the whole the French Government was of opinion that the English demands needed considerable modification. With Prior it was impossible to treat, as his authority was limited to receiving the King's answers. It was determined therefore to send back with him to London a person minutely instructed as to his Majesty's wishes, and with an ample commission to negotiate not only with the English Ministers, but with the accredited agents from other powers in alliance against France. The King's choice fell upon Ménager, a merchant of Rouen, who had already given great satisfaction in diplomacy, and who was reputed to know more about the commerce of the Indies than any person in the kingdom.*

In the first days of August, while the armies of Villars and Marlborough were confronting each other in positions which threatened a deadly battle, Prior, Gaultier and Ménager set off on their journey to London. An untoward accident interfered with the secrecy of their expedition. The authorities at Deal, suspecting that the three gentlemen who landed so quietly upon the beach and stole so promptly out of the town, were French spies, sent after and had them arrested at Canterbury. They were detained until an order for their release arrived from the Secretary's office. Prior tried to pass off under a false name; but he had travelled between England and the Continent too frequently in former days to be quite forgotten. He was recognised by a custom-house officer; and the intelligence of his journey and his arrest flew far and wide. To the intense annoyance of the Ministers the politicians in every London coffee-

* Mémoires de Torcy.

house were soon speculating upon the character of his mission. The affair got into the English and Dutch newspapers; and the public stocks of Amsterdam rose seven per cent. upon a rumour of peace.*

The three travellers reached London on the 7th of August; and on the following day Prior was admitted to an audience. Anne professed herself much pleased upon hearing of Ménager's arrival. Her only regret, she graciously added, was that, as it was necessary to keep the matter secret, she would be prevented from treating him as she would wish to treat the Minister of a great king. A lodging was hired for Ménager; and the care of attending to his comforts was confided to Gaultier, who was directed to apply to the Treasurer for all expenses.† During the next three months London must have been to the Frenchman an abode as monotonous and gloomy as Gertruydenburg had proved to Uxelles and Polignac; for the fear of exciting remark kept him at home until after dark, and he saw no company except the few persons who were in the secret. The precautions taken were, however, effectual. The story about Prior had set suspicion afloat that the Ministers were carrying on a correspondence with France; and more than one pamphlet made its appearance on the subject.‡ But not one person in that multitude of tattlers whose business or amusement it was to circulate news seems to have dreamt that an agent from the French king was actually in London, and that negotiations for peace were being carried on in nocturnal conferences.

Oxford, Shrewsbury, Jersey, Dartmouth and St. John, were the persons appointed by Anne to confer with Ménager. Prior and occasionally Gaultier were also permitted to be present at the meetings which were held sometimes at the residence of Jersey, but more frequently under Prior's roof. At first the Frenchman found himself in a difficult position. His antagonists would discuss nothing nor even listen to anything except what concerned their own nation, and invariably stopped him

* Boyer; *Postboy*, August 23; September 8; Lettres Historiques.

† Mémoires de Torcy; Report of the Committee of Secrecy, Parliamentary History, vol. 7.

‡ Swift wrote "A New Journey to Paris," and gives this account of it in his journal to Stella. "I will make a printer of my own sit by me one day and I will dictate to him a formal relation of Prior's journey, with several particulars, all pure inventions; and I doubt not but it will take."

when, after hearing all their demands, he commenced, in conformity with his instructions, to open to them the conditions which his Majesty desired to make with the other members of the Confederacy. Ménager thought it hard that, while the King of France was expected to pledge his word, not only on his own behalf, but on behalf of the King of Spain, to a number of stipulations in favour of British commerce, the English Ministers would not in return afford the slightest intimation of the course they intended to pursue with regard to the claims of their Allies, when general conferences for peace came to be held. But the diplomatist, a man of rare abilities, patient, observant and penetrating, soon acquired an insight into the position and characters of his antagonists that made him put up with many a rude answer and much reasoning that appeared on the face of it absurd and overbearing. They were, he saw, one and all impressed with a conviction that their lives were at stake in this business, and that their safety would mainly depend upon their extorting such terms as would be viewed with favour by their countrymen at large. A very slight accident, the death of the Queen and the demise of the sceptre to the House of Hanover, or a reaction of popular feeling might bring back the Whigs to power and subject them to judges who, they knew, would be merciless. When that terrible day of reckoning should come it would go hard with them, if the mercantile interest, instead of being exerted in their defence, should swell the cry of blood which would assuredly be raised by an aggravated party. Ménager soon became convinced that the men with whom he was treating were actuated by very different motives from the men who had mocked and deluded his Majesty's plenipotentiaries at the Hague and Gertruydenburg, that they were really desirous of effecting a peace if they could secure such terms as would be likely to please the English public. But the endless difficulties they started reduced him not unfrequently to the verge of despair. Her Majesty's Ministers, it seemed to him, could not remain of the same opinion for two days together. One night everything would appear in a fair way of arrangement: at the next meeting he could expect nothing less from their gloomy countenances and indignant speeches than that they were determined to break off the

negotiations. Then some fresh point would be raised and insisted upon, pronounced an essential condition, and all at once abandoned. Oxford's behaviour was solemn and mysterious: Shrewsbury was serious and irresolute, sometimes appearing to wish that the envoy should be sent back, and then evincing an almost feverish anxiety to come to terms: Dartmouth kept out of the way as much as possible: St. John alone, who, on account of his mastery of the French language, was generally the spokesman, preserved a bold, steady, and decided mien.*

It was at length agreed that the negotiations should be confined to the subject of the concessions which should be made to England. The razing of the fortifications and destruction of the harbour of Dunkirk were points yielded, after a long struggle, by Ménager, upon a half-promise being made to him that the English would use their endeavours at the general conferences to obtain an equivalent for his Majesty out of the captured towns of Flanders. But the debates about the American trade threatened to end in a deadlock. The Ministers wanted securities for their commerce, and declared that nothing less would content them than the delivery by the King of Spain of some towns in the West Indies. Ménager, thoroughly convinced that Philip would consent to nothing of the kind, and unwilling to involve his own sovereign in the humiliation of being compelled to ask for what would be refused, firmly rejected this proposition. He offered an exemption from certain duties for English produce and manufactures, and with this concession, coupled with the transference of the contract for supplying negroes, the Ministers at last thought it prudent to express themselves satisfied. The Hudson's Bay territories, in which the few English hunters found themselves exposed to the overpowering rivalry of the French settlers in Canada; and Newfoundland, out of which the English had been driven in 1708, were added by Ménager without dispute. But a reservation, which he had been specially instructed to make, of liberty to the French to continue their cod-fishing off the island, excited a clamour which well-nigh brought the negotiations to an end.

* Mémoires de Torcy. Jersey had been bought for £3,000 by the French Government; but he died on the 26th August, so that the money was lost.—Mackintosh Collections.

The Ministers decided to reject this reservation with a persistence for which the diplomatist could but dimly account. The explanation is that they were expecting from day to day intelligence that a blow had been struck in Canada which would extinguish the French interest in the new world. It is necessary to relate the history of an expedition which departed from Portsmouth in the summer of this year with the design of capturing Quebec.

The commencement of the eighteenth century found the French in nominal possession of the whole American continent lying north of the St. Lawrence. Their property in the soil, such as it was, they had contrived for something like a hundred years to defend both against the ambitious colonists of New England, and against encircling hordes of savages, chiefly by means of forts erected at Quebec, Montreal, and Niagara. During that European war which terminated with the peace of Ryswick the struggle between the English and French for supremacy in these regions was keen; for every one of those motives was present which incite mankind to mutual slaughter —cupidity, animosity of race, and difference of superstition. The foolish aboriginals lent their tomahawks alike to the Catholics of Canada and the Puritans of Massachusetts; and in glancing over the horrors which resulted from these alliances, it is not easy to decide whether the Indians were the masters or only the disciples in the art of cruelty. Peace succeeded and found parties in much the same position as before the war. But the peace lasted barely more than four years; and then another period of frightful insecurity to life and property began. It was perhaps fortunate that the home governments both of England and France, absorbed by their own difficulties, could spare little aid to their colonists in the work of exterminating each other. In 1708 the French fishermen of Newfoundland, assisted by their compatriots in Canada, succeeded in driving their English competitors completely out of the island, an insult which the English most amply revenged two years later by driving the French out of Nova Scotia, or Acadia, as it was then called. The leader in this last exploit was Francis Nicholson, a spirited New Englander, the dream of whose life it was to expel the French from this part of the world

altogether. This man, in 1709, made a voyage to his mother country, accompanied by four Indians, whose kingly titles, strange complexions, and marvellous habits would, he hoped, awaken an interest in American affairs. The experiment succeeded. The Indians, after a few necessary additions had been made to their dress, became the rage of London society, were entertained by the nobility, were presented at Court, addressed their royal sister in a complimentary speech, and bestowed upon her, as a pledge of their protection, a belt of wampum. The Minister thought it prudent to yield to the popular voice, which demanded an expedition in aid of the English and their interesting allies. Six ships, a few hundreds of soldiers, and the royal authority to obtain such assistance as he could from the governors of the various States, were entrusted to Nicholson. The armament set sail in May, 1710, appeared in less than five months before the fort of Port Royal, in Nova Scotia, and soon obliged the commandant to surrender. The name of the place was changed, out of compliment to the Queen, to Annapolis; and its capture insured to the English the entire possession of the peninsula.

Elated with this success, Nicholson returned to England with his brain on fire to accomplish a still more magnificent undertaking. He now asked for an expedition, the object of which should be not only to recover Newfoundland, but to expel the French from their ancient possession of Canada. The scheme was of a nature to recommend itself to Ministers newly appointed and anxious for popularity. It promised much real advantage to England, and it was certain that, if successful, the spirit and judgment of those who planned and sanctioned it would be applauded to the skies by the mercantile classes. St. John threw himself into the project with his usual ardour. The preparations were pressed forward rapidly and with praiseworthy secrecy. Five thousand men, all English, were, to the infinite annoyance of Marlborough, withdrawn from the army of the Netherlands. In the first week of May, 1711, no less than twelve ships of the line, besides transports crowded with troops, departed from Plymouth, leaving the public to speculate as to what the destination of this formidable armament might be. The Ministers awaited the result with anxiety; but the

progress of those upon whom their hopes depended was slow. Throughout the whole time of Ménager's residence in England it was confidently expected that every day would bring news of the fall of Quebec, and of the annihilation of the French power in the New World. It was not until after his departure that intelligence arrived of the melancholy fate which had befallen the expedition.

The causes of the miscarriage are sufficiently obvious. The Ministers, after the event, were severely censured for entrusting the command of the troops to General Hill, an officer whom it had pleased the Queen to force up through the grades of military rank for the double purpose of gratifying his sister, Mrs. Masham, and of mortifying Marlborough. But inasmuch as the troops never reached a human enemy, Hill's incompetency had nothing to do with the failure of the expedition. The enterprise was, in fact, planned exclusively by landsmen, who seemed to have imagined that wherever the maps indicated that there was water, it was safe to send a squadron. It is unlikely that they could have heard much of those dangers which, even in the present day, after all that has been done by nautical survey, render the gulf of St. Lawrence peculiarly formidable to the navigator—its iron-bound coasts, its treacherous currents, its sunken rocks, the heavy fogs which brood almost continuously over the cold waters, and which, when raised for a moment, reveal terrific glimpses of huge moving icebergs. The Admiral, Sir Hovenden Walker, was encouraged to expect that, when he reached Boston, he could easily procure French pilots to steer his ships through the labyrinth. But this proved not to be the case. After a delay of five weeks in the locality only one man had been found who even professed to know anything of the St. Lawrence, the master of a French ship which had been captured on its way to Quebec. The accounts which this person gave of the difficulties of the voyage were by no means reassuring. The gallant Admiral, however, with this Frenchman in charge of the helm of his own vessel, determined to make at least an attempt to execute the task which had been assigned him. On the 30th of July the squadron set sail, leaving Nicholson behind to raise a force in the States and penetrate into Canada by

land. All the ships, after a voyage of three weeks, reached the mouth of the St. Lawrence in safety; and then a frightful disaster occurred. A dense fog settled down on the sea: it blew hard: a strong current, which escaped the notice of those on board, carried the ships swiftly along with it. While still heading to the south the bewildered mariners suddenly found themselves among the rocks and islands of the north shore. With much difficulty the men of war extricated themselves, but eight of the transports, less controllable or not so well manned, were cast away with as many hundred soldiers. The Admiral and General summoned a council of war. The provisions with which the expedition was furnished, could not, it was stated, last above ten weeks. The Ministers at home had relied upon the ability of the Admiral to increase his supplies at Boston, but provisions had been as unprocurable as pilots. Under these disheartening circumstances the captains, naval and military, came to an unanimous conclusion that their only wise course was to return as quickly as possible to England. The squadron reached Spithead on the 9th of October (Old Style), five days after Ménager's departure. A terrible fate was still in store for the *Edgar*, a ship of seventy guns, which had borne the flag of the Admiral. A week after its arrival at anchorage, it blew up with four hundred men on board.*

At length the negotiations, after many narrow escapes of a rupture, drew to an amicable termination. It was settled that such points upon which the English insisted, but which Ménager would not yield, should be referred to the general conferences. But just as all parties were preparing to sign the preliminaries a fresh difficulty was started. It now seems to have occurred to the Ministers for the first time that, in treating with a sovereign who harboured the Pretender, they were rendering themselves obnoxious to more than one act of Parliament. Ménager, however, persuaded them to add this risk to the numerous other risks they ran by their surreptitious dealings with an agent of France. Upon the 27th of September three instruments were signed. The first of these related exclusively to Great Britain, and contained in separate columns the demands made by the

* Full details relating to this expedition are given in Boyer and the Lettres Historiques.

English Ministers and the King's answers to them. It was signed by Ménager and the two secretaries, St. John and Dartmouth, who took the precaution of appending a declaration that they accepted these preliminaries in obedience to the Queen's express orders. The second instrument stated what his Majesty was willing to concede to the Duke of Savoy; and the third contained the conditions which the King would accept as the basis of a general peace. These were signed by Ménager only.*

Matters being thus settled to the satisfaction of the Ministers, the envoy was taken down to Windsor, smuggled up a back-stair into the Queen's apartment, and introduced by St. John to her Majesty. Anne spoke to him a few kind words. She did not like war, she said, and she would do her utmost for the restoration of peace. When it should be concluded she would be glad to live on good terms with a king who was so nearly allied to herself in blood; and she hoped that their subjects would be good friends. Ménager, after a final interview with the Ministers, who loaded him with protestations of their sincerity, returned to France under the protection of a Queen's messenger.†

It was time that he should take his departure, for a rumour had got abroad that two agents from the King of France were in London. On the evening before the preliminaries were signed a number of persons collected before a house in Pall Mall, where, it was said, the French gentlemen resided. But the crowd was contented with staring at the walls, and separated without any muscular demonstrations of feeling. The public mind was, however, at a high state of tension, and the editor of the *Postboy* reaped a harvest by publishing a series of mysterious articles in which the critics of the coffee-houses fancied they detected a better style, a cleaner turn of the sentences, and a greater depth of information than the compositions of that publication usually exhibited. The *Postboy* kept up the profitable deception as long as possible. Upon the 13th of

* All these papers are printed in the Appendix to the Parliamentary History, vol. 7. I have made no use whatever of a book entitled "Minutes of the Negotiations of M. Ménager." This was written by Defoe, and is, I am confident, nothing but scandalous invention.

† Memoires de Torcy.

October the bold and ingenious editor hazarded two of the articles of the treaty which he professed to have from undoubted hands. But the same morning saw the printing in the *Daily Courant* of seven preliminary articles, which proved to be actually a copy of the contents of one of the instruments signed by Ménager. It had been forwarded to that newspaper by Count Gallas, the Imperial Minister.*

No sooner was Ménager out of the country than the English Ministers had taken the step of communicating the King's offers for a general peace to the ambassadors of the Allied Powers who were in London. Gallas, with the rest of the diplomatic body, received a copy of the document, and the indignation with which its contents inspired him was more than he could control. It seemed, then, that Charles was, after all the encouragement he had received, and the efforts he had made in person, to be thrown over by the English. That great principle for which so much blood had been shed, that this prince should have the whole of the Spanish dominions, it seemed was now to be abandoned. Gallas had long suspected that the new Ministers were intent upon some villainy. But all his efforts to penetrate into their secrets had been baffled. He now despatched to the *Daily Courant* a copy of the instrument which had been communicated to him, in the hope that the indignation of the English public would equal his own. The public mind was, in fact, greatly agitated by the intelligence. A score of pamphlets made their appearance, some scurrilously reviling the Ministers for listening to such conditions of peace, and others endeavouring to prove that the conditions were reasonable and advantageous to the country.† In truth, the offers of the French king were couched in such general terms that little else was clear beyond the principle that Philip was to remain the monarch at least of Spain. Advantages to England and Holland for their commerce, barriers to Holland, Savoy, and the Empire, and the razing of the fortifications of Dunkirk were promised. But these promises were of the most vague description; and by the great mass of the people they were barely

* Boyer; *Daily Courant*, October 13.

† Boyer and the Lettres Historiques give the titles of several broadsides. There is a collection of them entitled "Pills to Purge State Melancholy."

noticed in the pain and surprise occasioned by the general tenour of the preliminaries. It must be remembered that four years back the Parliament had formally laid down the axiom that no peace with France could be safe or honourable without the restitution by the House of Bourbon of the whole of the dominions of Spain. That axiom was in perfect consonance with the general opinion. From the very commencement of the war it had been industriously instilled by Whig writers into the hearts of the people. Not one author had ventured to expose either the gross injustice of forcing a king upon the Spaniards, or the extreme improbability that the Allies would succeed in conquering and holding down permanently a country at a great distance from their own resources, inhabited by a population enthusiastically attached to Philip, and cursed or blessed with a climate severely trying to the constitution of foreigners. If such an author had been found in England he might seasonably have reminded his countrymen that an insult precisely similar to that which they were now offering the Spaniards had roused themselves to fury when offered by Louis XIV. But the doctrines of the Whigs still remained uncorrected in the public mind. The rumour that the Ministers were negotiating a peace no doubt gave pleasure to multitudes who had grown weary of the heavy taxation necessitated by war. But it may be confidently affirmed that the belief was all but universal, and held alike by Whigs and Tories, that, let the terms be what they might on other points, the King of France would have to give up Spain. It was therefore with a deep sense of humiliation that the articles published in the *Daily Courant* were at first read. To accept such conditions was to admit that the war had been a failure, and that Englishmen had shed their blood and expended their money in vain.

The ferment, excited by a host of pamphleteers and ballad-mongers, was so great that the Ministers, against their usual principles, thought it expedient to adopt defensive measures. Fourteen booksellers and printers were arrested and brought to the bar of the Queen's Bench on the first day of term to answer a charge of libelling her Majesty's Government and Ministers. But Oxford and St. John were not disposed to bear hardly upon this class of persons; and they were all discharged

upon their own recognisances. Gallas was not permitted to escape so easily. The Ministers considered him a very impertinent and troublesome individual. His conduct during the last eighteen months had been that of a man very zealous for his master's interests, but not over prudent in the means he adopted to defend them. It was natural that he should admire the devotion with which the Whigs pressed on a war from which the House of Austria was to derive the principal benefit; and that, with his eyes dazzled by political prejudices, he should regard Marlborough and Godolphin, Sunderland and Wharton, as so many wise and benevolent gods. For a long time he refused to believe that an administration so energetic, patriotic, and glorious, could be overturned by such contemptible creatures as Harley and St. John. When the Tories actually succeeded to power his letters to the Court of Vienna expressed horror and indignation against the interlopers in every line. He entered into strict co-operation with the discontented Whigs. His house in Leicester Square became the head-quarters of the opponents of the Government. Under his sacred roof meetings were held, plans concocted, and a press was set up from which emanated political essays, lampoons, and ballads derisive of the Ministers, which no printer could venture to put in type elsewhere. To find out what terms of peace would be agreeable to the English Government was the principal object of his life. But the solemn countenance and oracular sentences of Oxford baffled all the inquiries of the German. That an agent of the King of France was in the country, and that the Ministers were carrying on negotiations with him, he had not the least suspicion. The bland politeness with which he was treated had even begun to raise a hope in his mind that the interlopers might not after all be the traitors he had believed them to be, when the horrible document containing the King's offers for a general peace, to which it was evident the Ministers had already yielded their consent, was placed in his hands. His publication of this document was regarded as a breach of confidence, and filled up the measure of his iniquities. The Ministers decided upon ridding themselves of this active and dangerous enemy. Sir Simon Cotterell, the Master of the Ceremonies, waited upon the Count, informed

him that his behaviour of late had not been agreeable to her Majesty, and that he was instructed to forbid him the Court. Any communication from his Imperial Majesty, Sir Simon added, which came through another Minister, would, however, be well received. Gallas required to know the reasons of the Queen's displeasure, and was told that these should be furnished to the Emperor. He wrote to St. John to inquire when he was expected to take his departure, and the reply was that he might go whenever he thought fit.*

The discontent which the publication of the seven articles had excited might perhaps have been alleviated could the Ministers have ventured, at this stage, to publish the special advantages which they had procured for the English commerce. But the difficult task was still before them of inducing the Dutch to follow their lead in the work of pacification; and it might well be feared that, if to the disappointment the Republican statesmen would surely feel in finding that the negotiations had been abstracted from their hands, commercial jealousy were added, their opposition would be angry and stubborn. The newly-created Earl of Strafford, who had been during some months in England, was now sent back to the Hague. He was charged to present to the States-general the King's offers for a treaty of peace, to express her Majesty's wishes that they would unite with her in bringing about a renewal of the conferences, and to press Heinsius to use his influence to procure passports for the French plenipotentiaries. The Queen, he was to say, had purposely avoided entering into any details with Ménager about the pretensions of her Allies, in order that the latter might be at perfect liberty to settle them for themselves with the French plenipotentiaries; and they might rest assured that her Majesty would conclude no peace unless reasonable satisfaction were given the States-general both with regard to their barrier and their trade. The bold spirit of St. John pervaded unmistakably the instructions furnished to the Earl as to the manner in which he was to meet the various objections which might be raised concerning the course which the Ministers had chosen to adopt. If any captious remarks should be made about the

* Boyer; Dartmouth's Note on Burnet; St. John's correspondence with Strafford; Journal to Stella.

special stipulations which the Queen had obtained in favour of her own trade, he was to reply that she had obtained nothing to the prejudice of the Dutch, and that she would regard it as a just cause of complaint if they continued to express any dissatisfaction of her conduct. What she had done for her allies in the course of the war would have justified her in settling the particular concerns of her kingdom before anything else was concluded. Strafford was also to impress upon the States her Majesty's recommendation to moderate their pretensions, and be satisfied with a reasonable barrier. Should they persist in holding out for the preliminaries of 1709, which contained concessions to which the House of Austria would never give its consent, and which had aroused jealousy and indignation in many European countries, they must understand that England would no longer support the principal burden of the war. They and the other allies of her Majesty would have to make their choice between furnishing their proper quota of troops and ships or concluding a peace.*

* The instructions were sent with a letter to Strafford of October 12. They are printed in Bolingbroke's Correspondence and in the Report of the Committee of Secrecy.

CHAPTER X.

STRAFFORD, upon returning to the Hague, found the authorities of the Republic in that ill humour which his instructors had anticipated. There was a general opinion, which had been fostered in great measure by the large capitalists and merchants of London, who were usually Whigs, that the Government of England had fallen into the hands of selfish, deceitful, unscrupulous men. But such a state of things, it was thought, could not last long. It was impossible that charlatans, supported by nothing more powerful or permanent than the partiality of a foolish Queen, and a crowd intoxicated with religion, could continue at the head of affairs. That very Parliament, they were advised, which was on the eve of re-assembling, would, in all probability, receive the preliminaries of peace in such a manner as would convince those who had given them their sanction of the expediency of flying the country in order to save their heads. Under the impression therefore that a little delay would set all to rights, the Dutch statesmen decided to consume time by sending over an envoy to confer with the English Government. The self-opinionated and noisy Buys was their choice. He was eager to try the effects of his oratory upon Anne, and expressed himself very confidently as to the result. He wanted nothing more than an hour's private audience, he said, and then all would be well. The words were uttered a little incautiously, for they reached the ears of persons in the French interest, were reported to Torcy, and promptly communicated by him to the Ministers.*

The Ministers, thus forewarned, had ample time to prepare the mind of the Queen. Buys, soon after his arrival, was taken by St. John to Windsor, and indulged with the private

* Mémoires de Torcy; Bolingbroke's Correspondence.

audience he solicited. He retired from the royal closet surprised and mortified at the failure of his argumentative powers. He, in truth, experienced only what had driven to despair finer geniuses, and more moving orators than himself, that to convince a Stuart, whose feelings were already enlisted against his cause, was a hopeless undertaking. The details of the interview are wanting; but it is easy to imagine that Anne listened with meek patience to a long harangue about the insecurity into which Europe would be plunged if the King of France were permitted to retain the Spanish dominions under his control; that her Majesty then delivered herself of a few set words; that the anxious advocate, returning to the charge, brought forward fresh arguments until, finding that nothing could be extracted from the royal lips but the same heart-breaking sentence, he desisted from the useless labour. Several attempts which Buys made to impress his wisdom on a Committee of the Privy Council, ended not more satisfactorily to him. But he was not yet at the end of his resources. It might be impossible to alter the determination of the Queen and her Ministers; but the pressure of a powerful domestic faction, aided by the representations of foreign courts, might have the effect of frightening them into some modification of their views. The lodgings of Buys soon became what the residence of Gallas had been, the head-quarters of the Opposition. The Whig chiefs there met the foreign ambassadors, and concerted plans with them. One of the results of their sittings was a memorial, which, towards the close of November, was presented to the Government by Baron Bothmar, the Hanoverian envoy. It set forth the gloomy prognostications his Electoral Highness had formed concerning the future of Europe, if England should allow herself, by any specious but deceitful allurements to her commercial cupidity, to be decoyed into an insecure peace. The King of France, master, by his grandson, of Spain, would assuredly not rest until a second creature of his own were seated on the throne of England; and what these Catholic kings, leagued together against the liberties of Europe and the Protestant religion, might accomplish, was almost too dreadful to consider. The Whigs employed every means to give a wide circulation to this memorial, which united the leading tenets and maxims of

their party. It was printed in the *Daily Courant*. It was compared by pamphleteers to the famous last speech of William, which had so magically opened the eyes of the nation to the designs of France; and copies, printed in large type, were framed and glazed and exposed to sale, in the hope that people would buy them to hang in their rooms.

The greatest of English subjects was present at and assisted in the framing of this document. Marlborough had crossed the sea in company with Bothmar. He had taken Bouchain upon the 14th of September, but for five weeks after that event both the Allied and French armies had remained in the field without attempting anything. The English general was anxious to form the siege of Quesnoy, but his applications to the Hague were answered only by excuses and evasions; and the indifference of the Dutch authorities to his making further conquests was sufficiently intelligible to him. Oxford had by this time avowed that negotiations were on foot between the Governments of England and France. The information was one drop more in that cup of mortification which was pressed to the lips of the unfortunate commander. As far as his own dignity was concerned it was bitter to reflect that, after having conducted the war for nine years with unexampled success, he was to be excluded from all share in the crowning glory of bringing it to an advantageous close; and that after having enjoyed for the same time the confidence of all the Allied sovereigns, he was now to be passed over as an individual whose opinion was of no importance. But as a patriot—and it is impossible to believe that a man who had raised to so proud an elevation the military reputation of his country was devoid of patriotism—his feelings must have been greatly agonized. Holding as he did all the political prejudices of the Whig party, he could not doubt that a peace made by Tories would be disgraceful and ruinous to his native land. The terms had, indeed, partly transpired. The English Government, it appeared, would make no objection to Philip retaining Spain. Such a concession implied, to the heated imaginations of Marlborough and the Whigs, nothing less than the surrender of all Europe to France, the abandonment of England to a Catholic league of princes, and the extinction of liberty and the Protes-

tant religion. And this was to be the miserable result of those glorious labours which had driven the French out of Germany and the Netherlands, and spread the fame of the English arms to the ends of the world.

Adversity brought into prominence one singular defect in the constitution of Marlborough's great mind. Throughout the period of his good fortune he had seemed almost indifferent to popular applause. But little as he might care for admiration and flattery, the fact now became evident that he could not brook a word of depreciation even when uttered by the most contemptible of mankind. The most malignant member of the Grub Street fraternity would have been penetrated by remorse could he have known the pain which his trumpery verses inflicted upon that heart which he took for granted was as insensible to ridicule as to praise. The afflicted hero once sent his agent, Arthur Maynwaring, who was himself an active pamphleteer on the Whig side, to remonstrate with Oxford about the licence he permitted to the Tory ballad-mongers and satirists. But the Minister, although at that time disposed to treat Marlborough with deference and kindness, was utterly unable to enter into his feelings upon the matter of libels. "The Duke," he replied, "must not mind them. I myself am called rogue in print every day; and what is more," he added, with a significant glance at Maynwaring, "I know the man who does it; but I intend to live fairly with him."*

It is remarkable that one of the most inveterate enemies of Marlborough belonged to that sex which is usually but too prone to the worship of heroes. The ardent Toryism of Mrs. de la Rivière Manley's political creed seems to have overborne her natural tendencies as a woman. That creed she derived from her father, Sir Roger Manley, governor of one of the Channel islands, who having suffered for his devotion to Charles I., and experienced without a murmur the customary ingratitude of Charles II., died with little else to bequeath to his daughter than his unalterable principles of loyalty. While young she was basely tricked out of her character; but the prurience of her compositions must suggest to her readers that her virtue hung rather loosely about her, and would, even

* An undated letter of Maynwaring to Marlborough in Coxe's Memoirs.

under favourable circumstances, have been a possession difficult to retain. She earned her living partly by a profession which the refinement of the present age forbids naming, and partly by writing romances and plays which, being among the most licentious works in the English language, had of course a considerable sale. In 1709 appeared her "Memoirs from the New Atlantis," a long series of anecdotes, in which lawless desire is depicted with a warmth of colouring which only female genius can give, but which to a reader not utterly depraved in taste, becomes monotonous from the apparent inability of the authoress to treat of any other theme. It was principally designed as a satire upon the Whigs all round, and excited no little indignation in a number of grave statesmen, who found themselves to their astonishment figuring, under thinly-disguised names, as heroes in all sorts of amorous tales. For this performance Mrs. Manley was summoned to the Secretary's office, and interrogated by Sunderland; but either in deference to her sex, or from the apprehension of difficulty in obtaining a conviction in her case, she was let off with a reprimand. During the next year, or in 1711, she made the acquaintance of Swift, and became what he called one of his understrappers. Whenever it was deemed expedient to enlighten or correct the public mind upon some subject, and the great writer was idly inclined, had other work on hand, or wished that his participation should not be known, the materials for a paper or pamphlet were furnished to Mrs. Manley. To her was entrusted the composition of the *Examiners* when Swift grew tired of writing them himself. A book from some Whig pen entitled "Bouchain," appeared in the autumn of 1711, and being provokingly laudatory of the great commander, was promptly answered by the understrapper. Marlborough, to whom both works were transmitted by good-natured friends, was half maddened to find his exploit of passing the French lines compared to a company of militia crossing a kennel, the glory of it, if any there were, attributed to Hompesch, and his capture of Bouchain in the sight of Villars's army stigmatized as the taking of a pigeon-house at the cost of sixteen thousand men. The world was also informed that the hero, of whom the world heard so much, was accustomed to duck his head whenever he heard the noise of a

cannon.* It must detract somewhat from our estimation of Marlborough to find that such rubbish as this drew from him an agonized appeal to the Ministers for justice upon the author. The only reply of St. John was a burst of contemptuous laughter. Oxford kept his countenance, and answered the appeal with good humour, although he declined to interfere. "I am grown so accustomed," he said, "to see myself in a libel, that I would willingly compound with ill-natured scribblers to write ten times as much more against me, on condition they would write against no one else."†

In truth, the Ministers, so far from sympathizing with the distresses of Marlborough, had by this time determined to proceed to extremities against him.‡ It had become evident that he was incurably hostile to their plans, and that all the influence his reputation and his position as Commander-in-Chief gave him, would be exerted to frustrate them. It seems strange that, while resenting deeply every attack made upon him by Tory scribblers, he should have been so little cautious of giving provocation by his own conduct. He had become the hero whom a little band of well-known Whig pamphleteers delighted to honour. Maynwaring, an excellent man of business and a writer of some ingenuity, had in July, 1710, diverted the town with a satire upon the ambition and intrigues of Oxford, and was now in the habit of attacking the Government every week in the *Medley*. Intimately associated with this gentleman was John Oldmixon, whose reputation has survived that of his friend from the circumstance of his having given to the world the worst history of England that ever was or is ever likely to be written. The student who resorts to his voluminous work for information rises from the perusal with disgust and wonder that a man who lived through a considerable part of the period he professes to pourtray, who was personally acquainted with many of the characters whose actions he undertakes to record, should have contented himself with drawing his

* The pamphlet is entitled "A Vindication of the Duke of Marlborough;" Boyer; Marlborough to Oxford, October 19—30.

† Oxford to Marlborough, October 30, November 10.

‡ Bolingbroke in a letter to Strafford, November 21, December 2, says, "I hear that in his conversation with the Queen he has spoken against what we are doing. His fate hangs heavy upon him. He has of late pursued every counsel which was the worst for him."

materials wholly from party squibs, without contributing one atom of intelligence upon matters which fell under his own observation, or making one comment which is not either extravagantly laudatory or extravagantly abusive. Beside this contemptible writer the often-censured Burnet assumes the dignity of a philosophic historian; for Burnet's prejudices were at least those of a great mind and a benevolent heart, and his narrative is perhaps as fair as it was possible for a man of that generation to pen. But authors like Maynwaring and Oldmixon, whether incited or not to their literary labours by Marlborough, the Ministers felt they could afford to despise. There was, however, another adherent of the Duke's whose power to injure they regarded as more formidable. This was Francis Hare, who had been from the commencement of the war his Grace's chaplain, and who used his pulpit not unfrequently for the inculcation of Whig maxims among the officers and subalterns of the army. The mischief which this clergyman's tongue could effect it was impossible to overlook, for the whole force, from the generals to the drummer-boys, was devoted to Marlborough, and was already furious against the cabal of court favourites who were meditating the deposition of their idol and the sacrifice of their country's honour. The Ministers might well think that the man who could permit sermons to be preached publicly and in his own presence full of remarks obviously directed against them, had little right to expect redress at their hands against libellers.*

The first rumour of what was preparing for him at home reached Marlborough upon his return to the Hague. His friends reported to him that the commissioners appointed by Parliament in the spring for examining the public accounts had been pushing their inquiries into the accounts of the army, and had made what they seemed to consider a great discovery. They had ascertained from Sir Solomon de Medina, a Jew who held a contract for supplying bread and bread-waggons to the army, that during the last four years he had made an annual present of nearly six thousand pounds to the Commander-in-Chief. The circumstance had been allowed to transpire, for the commissioners, who were all high Tories, were too much

* St. John to the Queen, October 17—28.

delighted with their discovery to keep the secret, and the public was marvelling over the strange revelation. Marlborough hastened to offer an explanation. He wrote a letter which was laid before the commissioners. The sums alluded to, he stated, had been allowed as a perquisite to the Commander-in-Chief of the army of the Low Countries both before the Revolution and since, and the use to which they were applied was to procure secret intelligence of the enemy's designs. The ten thousand pounds a year regularly allowed by Parliament for this purpose was insufficient. There was still another revenue, he added, which was devoted in the same manner. He had himself, while acting as the plenipotentiary of King William, concluded an agreement with the different sovereigns of the auxiliaries that two and a half per cent. should be deducted from the pay of their troops; and when he succeeded to the command of the army the Queen authorized him by warrant to receive and employ the revenue arising from this source. Next to the blessing of God and the bravery of the soldiers, Marlborough observed, the advantages obtained during the war were attributable to the timely and good advices procured by help of this money.*

The depositions of Medina and Marlborough's own admissions furnish together the grounds upon which a charge of peculation was now based by the enemies of the great soldier. The facts of the case are clear enough, and no additional light has since been thrown upon it. In the first place it may be remarked that the imputation of embezzling is one which might be brought against any minister who ever had the distribution of secret-service money. The reputation of a man who can produce no vouchers for his expenditure must depend upon whether he has more friends or enemies in the world. It is not too much to say that the accusation against Marlborough would now be regarded as a mere piece of party spite, were it not for his notorious love of money. The revenues he derived from three sources for secret service cannot have amounted to less than thirty thousand pounds a year. That the service was performed in the most efficient and admirable manner is indeed beyond dispute. But was the whole sum arising from

* Printed in the Appendix to Boyer's Annals.

perquisites, stoppages and Parliamentary grants employed in this manner, or was there a surplus that remained in his Grace's hands? If there was, it may seem plain that accounts should have been rendered for it to the parties interested. The purpose for which these funds were originated could not have contemplated personal advantage to the General.

With regard to the deductions from the pay of the auxiliary troops the Parliament was clearly not concerned. The right of making these deductions had been granted by foreign sovereigns to the General, and the General had been expressly authorized by the Queen to receive and disburse at his discretion the sums that accrued from this source. If the foreign sovereigns were satisfied with Marlborough's employment of the money, no one else had a right to complain. But the perquisites on the bread contracts are open to objection. They seem to have been originated by Dutch statesmen with the object of supplying the General with a fund to be employed in secret services. But however innocent was the motive, and even assuming that the money was strictly spent in the service for which it was intended, Marlborough could scarcely have been justified in following the example set by Dutch generals and applying it to the bread contracts for the English troops. The contractors, no doubt, included in some shape the perquisites they paid to him in the bills presented to the English exchequer. A deception had evidently, therefore, been practised upon the Parliament, and it is not strange that, when the circumstance became known, men should have been slow to admit that the deception was honourable and necessary.

Marlborough was, in truth, under great apprehensions as to the result of an inquiry into these passages of his conduct. The report of the commissioners would be laid before the Commons, and constituted as the House now was there could be little hope that his explanations would receive much attention. He saw that his only chance of escape was to conciliate the Ministers. He appealed to Oxford for protection in a strain of entreaty which, coming from a man so illustrious and but two years back so powerful, it is almost painful to read.* A week

* Marlborough to Oxford, November 10—21.

after he followed his letter to England. During his passage up the Thames he received intelligence which determined him to stop for a night at Greenwich. It was the 17th of November, the anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's accession, which the populace still continued to signalize by bonfires and processions intended to show their zeal for the Protestant religion and their contempt and hatred for Popery. There had been rumours abroad that the Whigs designed to stir up the people against the Government on this occasion. The members of the Kit Kat Club, it was reported, had given large subscriptions for a procession of extraordinary magnificence. The puppets representing the Pope, the Devil, and the Pretender, would be sumptuously dressed, and the Devil would be the exact counterpart of Lord Oxford. Agents had been provided who would circulate in the crowd clamouring that the country was sold to France, that the Queen was dead, that the Pretender had landed; and it was expected that a mob, infuriated with indignation and liquor, which the Whigs would distribute freely, would be roused up to attack the houses of some of the leading Tories.* In the face of such rumours Marlborough thought it prudent to defer entering London until the following day. The return of the hero was always the signal for the collection of a crowd of vociferous admirers, and if it took place at this critical time the Ministers would doubtless aver that it was expressly designed to encourage the rioters.

The designs and subscriptions of the Whigs had, however, been greatly exaggerated, and the peace of the community was not broken. Yet this happy result was perhaps due in part to the vigour and precautions of the Government. Upon the night before the anniversary a party of soldiers broke into an empty house in Drury Lane where the puppets had been deposited; and Pretender, Pope, and Devil, four cardinals, four Jesuits, and four friars were abstracted and taken off to the Cockpit. The dreaded day passed off quietly. The trained bands of London and Westminster appeared under arms, and in force sufficient to check all attempts at disturbance. But there were zealots who were bitterly indignant at being hindered from celebrating after the old fashion an anniversary

* *Postboy*, November 22.

so peculiarly dear to good Protestants. No previous Government, they said, had attempted to suppress the festivities of this day except that of James II.*

Marlborough returned to London to find his friends laughing over the groundless alarms of the Ministers about a Whig plot, and still in high hopes of being able to frustrate their schemes of peace. It was now clear that the Whigs would have a majority in the Upper House. They had recently acquired an important accession of strength. Nottingham, the prince of high Tories and main pillar of the Established Church, had actually condescended to make terms with them, and had brought over a little band of friends who had either conceived the same disgust as himself against the Ministers, or were content to receive from him the word of command. This union between men whose opinions upon every important question of the time, civil and religious, were diametrically opposed, is one of the most curious in the history of parties. Both sides agreed to surrender a fundamental article of their creed. The Whigs delivered up the Dissenters to persecution by consenting to withdraw their opposition to a bill against occasional conformity: Nottingham, who had once in each session wept over the ruin which had befallen his unhappy country through the folly of the Whigs in launching her into a gigantic continental war, consented to vote against the conclusion of a peace, except upon a condition which he knew had become almost impossible, that Philip should surrender Spain and the Indies. The Whigs seem to have thought that religious freedom was of less importance to the country than her political interests, and such Tories as Nottingham that all considerations should be postponed to the exaltation of the Church. Viewed from the standpoint of impartiality, it may appear that each side preferred to sacrifice the best in order to indulge in the worst tenet of the faction. To release their countrymen from the fetters of civil and religious tyranny had been hitherto the noble aim of the Whigs: a determination to revive the decaying spirit of persecution must be regarded as the principal reproach against the Tories. Yet the Tories had the merit of perceiving what the Whigs would not perceive, that a prolongation of the war

* Lettres Historiques; Boyer; Journal to Stella.

must simply entail upon the country an useless expenditure of its resources. Thus the Whigs abandoned the sacred cause of freedom to gratify a foolish desire of continuing the contest with France: the Tories of Nottingham's party abjured a sound doctrine as regarded the war in order to gratify their love of persecution.*

In spite, however, of this reinforcement to the Opposition, the Ministers pressed on the business of concluding a peace with energy and resolution. Buys continued to have audiences of the Privy Council, but to little purpose; nor could he make any more impression upon the Ministers to whom he paid frequent visits. Strafford, in the meantime, was bringing the whole weight of the English Government to bear upon the authorities of the Republic. Her Majesty, he told them, was determined on this point. She would concert with them no plans for continuing the war until they had agreed to join with her in opening a congress, and any further delay in sending passports for the plenipotentiaries of France she would consider as a refusal to comply with her request. The Dutch began to perceive the necessity of yielding. They were aware that the English and French Ministers were corresponding on friendly terms, and that the King had offered, in case of their obstinacy, to send his plenipotentiaries to London with power to conclude a separate peace with the Queen. Blank passports had some time since been forwarded to Buys; but that personage had taken upon himself the responsibility of retaining them, in the confidence that the powerful opposition to the Ministers which he saw about him must eventually succeed in its object. But the peremptory orders he now received from his Government left him no choice but to deliver them into the Queen's hands. The Republic had, on a sudden, become singularly courteous and complying. The date of opening the congress, Buys said, had, in accordance with her Majesty's wishes, been fixed for the 12th of January (New Style). The place where it should be held had also been left to her selection. This was a point which had been frequently discussed with Ménager. The

* Nottingham was unmercifully lashed by the Tories for deserting his party. See Swift's amusing ballad commencing "An orator Dismal of Nottinghamshire;" see also an advertisement in the *Postboy* of December 6.

Hague had the recommendation of being the city in which the ambassadors of all the Allied Powers resided, but Louis had one strong objection to holding the conferences there. The Pensionary Heinsius he regarded as his inveterate enemy, and the chief promoter of those degrading preliminaries of 1709 which had wounded him to the soul. If the Hague were the place of congress, there could be little doubt that Heinsius would be one of the plenipotentiaries of the Republic. But the duties of his post confined him to his province of Holland. The English Ministers readily appreciated the wisdom of his objection, and it was settled that the congress should be opened at the quiet town of Utrecht.*

The hopes of the Opposition now rested almost entirely on the Parliament. The day fixed for its assembling, the 13th of November, arrived, and to the mortification of the Whigs, Parliament was prorogued to the 26th. That date came, and the meeting was again put off till the 7th of December. Meanwhile Anne and her Ministers were busily endeavouring to win over the refractory peers. Marlborough, Somers, Cowper, and many other members of the Opposition were summoned into the closet. But Anne found her entreaties that they would not counteract her plans answered only by expostulations upon the dangerous course she was pursuing. Burnet, to whom she expressed a hope that "bishops would not be against peace," spoke his sentiments with the fervour and conviction of a Jewish prophet. The consequence of such a peace as that which was now designed, he declared, would be the surrender of all Europe into the hands of France. In less than three years the Queen would be murdered, the Pretender would be king, and the fires would be rekindled in Smithfield.†

It was, however, just at this conjuncture that a book made its appearance which unquestionably exercised great influence over that considerable body of Englishmen who, not being professional politicians, had minds accessible to argument. It was called the "Conduct of the Allies," a title expressive of the author's object to show the treatment to which England had been subjected by those princes and powers whose cause against France she had taken upon herself to defend. It was written

* Mémoires de Torcy. † Burnet.

by Swift under the supervision of St. John, who supplied arguments and information of such a kind as at once to distinguish the little volume from the ordinary productions of the press. In the excited state of the public mind its fame spread with wonderful rapidity. The first edition of a thousand copies was sold in two days, and second, third, and fourth editions were exhausted in a week. The book is, in truth, a miracle of clear and forcible logic; but its rapid sale was, no doubt, less owing to its literary merits than to its evidently proceeding from an official source. The great lesson it was intended to teach was that England should from the first have engaged in the contest with France not as a principal but as an auxiliary to the Powers more immediately interested. She had, however, as the war proceeded, taken upon herself greater and greater obligations by reason of the failure of her allies to fulfil their own engagements, until at length nearly the whole burden of maintaining the struggle had devolved upon the country which had the least expectation of profiting by success.*

While the principles inculcated in the "Conduct of the Allies" were under discussion in every political circle, the Parliament met. The Ministers displayed a bland serenity which amazed their friends, who were devoured with anxiety for the future. To many Tories it seemed impossible that the Administration could survive the attacks which were to be expected from all quarters. There was a pervading fear that, even in the royal closet, evil influences were at work. The Duchess of Somerset, who had succeeded Lady Marlborough in the office of Mistress of the Robes, was evidently drawing to herself the chief share in the confidence and affections of Anne. Her husband, restless and capricious, was now become a violent enemy of the Ministers he had so largely contributed to raise to power, and was thought to be trying by means of his wife to bring about another change of Government. Swift, whose hopes of ecclesiastical advancement were now bound up with the Tories, and who had moreover contracted a warm friendship for several of the leading members of the Government, was in

* This Marlborough himself admits. "I am perfectly convinced that, besides the draining of our nation both of men and money almost to the last extremity, our Allies do by degrees so shift the burden of the war upon us that, at the rate they go on, the whole charge must at last fall on England."

great terror from the arts of this lady. He bemoaned the lazy, dawdling ways of the Treasurer, and tried hard to convince his patron that, unless he could contrive to get the Duchess dismissed, she would be the ruin of the cause. But Oxford knew better than to interfere in a matter in which the private feelings of the Queen were involved.*

The speech which opened the session was an energetic composition, and breathed defiance to the Opposition in every line. Its very first sentence contained a sharp reflection upon the Whigs. Her Majesty expressed her satisfaction in being able to inform the Parliament that, notwithstanding the arts of those who delighted in war, both time and place had been fixed for the opening of conferences towards a general peace. Her allies, and especially the States-general, she said, and the Opposition stood aghast at the audacity of the assertion, had by their ready concurrence in her measures signified the confidence they reposed in her. She, on her part, would do her utmost to procure for them every reasonable satisfaction. She asked for supplies for carrying on the war with vigour, which would, she said, be the most effectual means to secure a good peace. In settling the treaty, special care would be taken of the interests of English commerce. Peace would moreover, she said, afford the requisite opportunity to encourage home manufactures. The speech did not omit an expression of her Majesty's desire to secure the succession of Hanover, and it concluded with a very necessary exhortation to unanimity.

Anne retired only to disrobe, and then returned to the House of Peers, in the hope that her presence might have some effect in restraining the ardour of the Opposition. The address of thanks for the royal speech was moved by Earl Ferrers, and was seconded and supported by several Tory peers. Then Nottingham rose, and poured forth a long harangue about the insufficiency of the preliminaries. Her Majesty, he said, was engaged to restore the whole monarchy of Spain to the House of Austria.

* "We cannot be stout
Till Somerset's out."

"We must certainly fall if the Duchess of Somerset be not turned out, and nobody believes the Queen will ever part with her. Lord Dartmouth despairs, and is for giving up. Lewis is of the same mind. But Lord Treasurer only says poh! poh! all will be well."—Journal to Stella.

Both as a matter of honour and one of expediency, it was incumbent on her to continue the war until those engagements had been made good. He himself had more interest in desiring peace than any man; for his property consisted entirely in land, and he had fourteen children to support. But he would rather live on two hundred a year than see his country sacrificed by an insecure peace. In conclusion, he moved, as an amendment to the address, the addition of a clause which should represent to her Majesty that, in the opinion of the House, no peace could be safe or honourable if Spain and the West Indies were allotted to any branch of the House of Bourbon.

The supporters of the Government endeavoured to parry this attack by asserting that such a clause was, in its nature, foreign to an address of thanks. Members had not come prepared to speak on the subject. The right time for discussing matters of this kind was when the House proceeded, according to custom, to take into consideration the state of the nation. Oxford, who had been for nearly a generation the oracle of the Commons upon Parliamentary usages and etiquette, and who seems to have flattered himself that, in a new circle, his claims to learning would be admitted as readily as by his old disciples, now rose and pronounced with sententious gravity that to offer advice in an address of thanks was against the rules and orders of the House. The unlucky teacher was at once pounced upon by the terrible Wharton. "The noble lord," observed that great master of sarcasm, "has, I fear, been too short a time a member of this House to be thoroughly conversant with its rules. I put it to the whole assembly whether there is any such order in existence as he mentions." "There is nothing of the kind," said Buckinghamshire, who had long exercised among the Peers the same species of authority Oxford had exercised over the Commons, and was doubtless little pleased to find an upstart contending with him in his own province. Sunderland, who followed Wharton, spoke with great vehemence. "Is it possible," he said, "that any member can be unprepared to offer us his thoughts upon a subject which for the last ten years has been the principal one of our consultations? Are we not the same peers who have so often represented to her Majesty that no peace can be safe

or honourable unless Spain be recovered from the House of Bourbon? It is indeed true that I see some new faces among us, and perhaps," he added, with a glance at the Treasurer, "it may be well to remind them that in the last reign four lords were impeached for having made a partition treaty."

The Earl of Anglesea, a Tory, who held several posts in Ireland, and who had, with Ormond, the Lord-Lieutenant, hastened up from that kingdom to the assistance of his party, now joined in the debate. He insisted upon the necessity of easing the country from the burden of an expensive war, and recommended the House to leave the question to the royal wisdom. "We might," he added rudely, "have enjoyed the blessing of peace ever since the battle of Ramilies, had not the interest of some persons lay in prolonging the war." At this pointed remark, Marlborough rose with even more than his accustomed dignity. "I deem myself happy," he said, with impressive solemnity, "in having this opportunity of vindicating myself from a charge which my enemies have so frequently brought against me. I appeal to the Queen," he continued, bowing towards the gallery in which she was seated, "whether, during the period I had the honour of serving her, both as general and plenipotentiary, I did not constantly inform her of the proposals of peace which were made, and request her instructions with regard to them? I may declare with a safe conscience, in the presence of her Majesty, of this illustrious assembly, and of that supreme Being before whom in the course of nature I must shortly appear, that I have ever been desirous of a safe, honourable, and lasting peace. My advanced age, and the fatigue of warfare, make me ardently long for some repose during the remainder of my days, that I may think upon eternity. I cannot have the least motive for prolonging this war. Honours and riches, far beyond my desert or expectation, have been heaped upon me by the generosity of her Majesty and the Parliament. I shall be willing, as long as I can crawl, to serve my Queen and country in the hope of obtaining an honourable peace; but I think it my bounden duty to represent to her Majesty that my opinion of a peace based on the seven preliminary articles is the same as that of our

allies. The safety and liberties of Europe will be in imminent danger if Spain and the West Indies are left to the House of Bourbon."*

Such was the opinion of one of the coolest and most sagacious minds ever created. There can be no doubt of Marlborough's sincerity in this instance. His letters to his wife and to his most intimate friends are replete with similar assertions of his belief. The course of events has indeed shown that the opinion was wrong, that the fears excited by Philip's retaining the monarchy of Spain were wholly chimerical. That Prince did retain the kingdom in dispute; but France was not the stronger for it, nor was England given over to the Pretender and the Catholic religion; nor were any of the other Powers of Europe in a worse condition than before. Nay, in a very few years the two countries, whose union seemed to Marlborough and the Whigs so close and so threatening to the liberties of mankind, were actually at war with each other. But it would be unjust to those great statesmen to criticize their opinions from any other standpoint than that of 1711. With the lights they then possessed their fears were reasonable enough. A whole generation had grown up to regard Louis XIV. as a monster of ambition, with a mission from the Devil to make slaves and Papists of the whole human race, a perfidious tyrant with whom it was useless to think of entering into a compact, whom it was absolutely necessary to bind with chains of iron. By force and fraud he had been continually enlarging his dominions, until the largest, and what under judicious management might become the wealthiest monarchy in the world, had fallen virtually into his possession. For that Philip was the mere tool of his grandfather, that both France and Spain were really governed from Versailles, seems to have been doubted by no Englishman of that period. It is worthy of remark that Swift, while exhausting his power of logic and his wit in demonstrating the hopelessness of attaining the ends proposed in the war, stigmatising the management of the Whigs and the greediness of the Allies of England, scarcely attempted to deal with the main argument of his adversaries,

* Boyer; Burnet; Lettres Historiques; Oxford to Strafford, December 8—19.

the danger of permitting the monarchies of France and Spain to be controlled by two princes so nearly allied in blood. He admitted that to all intents and purposes those kingdoms were united; nor does he seem to have had the smallest prescience that, by the weakening of family ties and inherent differences between the two peoples, they would in a short time be as much severed as if no relationship existed between their sovereigns. The wonder is, therefore, not that the Whigs should have spurned from them a peace upon any other basis than Philip's resigning Spain, but that the Tory Ministers should have ventured to conclude a treaty upon terms apparently so fraught with danger to the liberties of Europe.

One argument, founded upon insufficient information, had tended greatly to mislead the Whigs. It was firmly believed that Philip regarded his grandfather with such a degree of reverence that, at a command from him, he would at once lay down his crown, and return to France with his old title of Duke of Anjou. It was in vain that Louis protested that his authority over his grandson was overrated, that to procure his resignation he would be obliged to have recourse to arms, and that none but unfeeling tyrants could think of urging him to undertake so unnatural a war. The Whigs gave no credit to his statements. They were convinced that it would not be necessary for him to employ force, that he had but to speak in a determined tone and he would be obeyed. The fortunate addiction of French generals, statesmen, and courtiers to the writing of memoirs has since revealed to us what was the true position of things at this period. From the day Philip passed the Pyrenees his grandfather's influence over him was greatly impaired. It ceased altogether as his remembrance of that awe-inspiring despot grew dim by time, as his obedience was claimed by a spirited and imperious wife, as he became conscious of the attachment of his subjects, and as he surrounded himself with Spanish counsellors. Although still looking to his grandfather for military and pecuniary assistance, he constantly showed, at any unpalatable counsels from the French Court, so much independence as to convince Louis that the notion he had once entertained of being able to govern Spain through the means of his grandson was nothing better than

a flattering delusion. No fact indeed connected with this war has been more satisfactorily established than that, had the King of France accepted the conditions offered him by the Allies in 1709, he could not have executed his engagements without sending an army into Spain.

The debate in the Lords' lasted for four hours, during the whole of which Anne had the patience to remain in her gallery. Almost every peer of note took part in it except Somers, whose increasing infirmities precluded him from speaking, although not from attending in his place. It was at length carried by sixty-one votes against fifty-five to insert the clause offered by Nottingham in the address of thanks.

The answer returned by her Majesty was misinterpreted, Burnet informs us, by the Whig peers who presented the address. Anne said that she would be sorry if any one thought she would not do her utmost to recover Spain and the West Indies from the House of Bourbon. This reply was at first considered to portend a change in the royal counsels. It was certainly ingenious. It admitted the desirability of the object pursued by the opposition, and this the Ministers could do with a safe conscience, for they seem to have been impressed with the same opinion as the Whigs that it was not for the general interests of European nations that a Prince of the House of Bourbon should reign over Spain. But it held out no promise to continue the war in case that end could not be obtained by diplomacy. The Ministers, in fact, regarded the position of Philip as being too firmly established to be overthrown, and were averse to any further squandering of the resources of the country for the purpose of compassing an object which seemed to them unattainable.

In the Commons' a similar amendment to the address of thanks was moved by the Whigs, but rejected by the overwhelming majority of two hundred and thirty voices against a hundred and six. Yet the Tories, in spite of a victory which assured them of their control over the finances, and thus rendered the continuance of the war without their approbation impossible, were greatly depressed by a variety of alarming rumours. It was reported that the Queen was wavering, that she knew not how to answer the remonstrances and reproaches

of the Allies, that the artful Duchess of Somerset was fast working her round to the principles of the Whigs, that a new Ministry with Somers at the head and Walpole for Secretary was all but decided upon, that there would be a dissolution of Parliament, and that the influence of the Court would be exerted in favour of the warlike party. Great stress was laid in this anxious time upon an incident which was considered as an indication that her Majesty's predilections for the Tories were on the wane. After the division upon the address of thanks she was preparing to retire from the House when Shrewsbury approached, and begged to know whether he, as Lord Chamberlain of the household, or the Marquis of Lindsay, who held the hereditary office of Lord Great Chamberlain, should have the honour of conducting her to her coach. "Neither of you," replied Anne peevishly, and gave her hand to Somerset, who was standing near. Even Mrs. Masham, who reported this circumstance to Swift, was alarmed, and suspected that another change was coming over the royal mind; for Somerset had just been loud in his opposition to the Ministers.* Yet a little reflection might have dissipated the fears of these anxious politicians. The Queen had conceived a great affection for the Duchess of Somerset, and the favour with which the wife was regarded, was, as usual, extended in some degree to the husband. Lindsay, moreover, although he had taken but small share in public life, was a Whig, and Shrewsbury was known to be a little in disgrace. The Ministers had pressed him to be one of the plenipotentiaries for England; but he had declined to act, and it was whispered that his sensitive timidity apprehended an approaching storm, and that he was endeavouring to effect a reconciliation with his old friends, the Whigs.

Throughout December Swift was in an agony of terror, and kept wandering from the house of one courtier to that of another to collect evidence about the words and looks of the Queen. The gloomy opinion he formed at the close of each day was that the Ministry was doomed, that the Whigs would return in triumph, that Oxford and his other great friends would end their lives on Tower Hill, and that he himself would

* Journal to Stella.

be hanged if he were caught. But he was determined to be off in time. He took St. John aside, and told him that although he had never asked a reward for his services, he considered he was justified in claiming to be made secure. Could he not be appointed Secretary to some foreign embassy? The new Ministers would of course recall him at once, but he would feign sickness, and remain abroad until the first fury of the storm should have spent itself. St. John tried to pacify him by protesting that all would very soon be well again. Oxford, whose mind was of too heavy a metal to be disturbed by the fears which tormented more sensitive constitutions, amused himself by rallying the great writer upon his cowardice.*

Yet the fears of the Tories, although in fact destitute of foundation, were far from being unreasonable. Everything depended at this conjuncture upon a Queen too stupid to comprehend the principles of either of the two great factions into which her subjects were divided, and who might at any moment determine, for some female reason, upon abandoning her new Ministers and being reconciled to her old friends. The present House of Commons would unquestionably throw obstacles in the way of an Administration which thought it necessary to prolong the war. But that House had been elected during a fit of abnormal excitement. The minds of men had had time to cool during the two years which had elapsed. The enthusiasm for Sacheverell and the imaginary terrors about the Church were already half forgotten. The Whigs were already half forgiven for their fancied designs upon religion. The Queen was the object of such unbounded love and reverence that, without a doubt, the bulk of the electors would be anxious, before all other considerations, to vote according to her wishes. If, therefore, the Parliament were dissolved and a report satisfactorily established that her Majesty was convinced that her Tory Ministers were attempting to entrap her into a dishonourable peace, the Whigs would probably recover more seats than they had lost in the last elections. The result, however, proved that sufficient allowance had not been made for the immovable character of Anne. Oxford hav-

* Journal to Stella.

ing once succeeded in instilling into the royal mind the precept that peace was better than war, the royal mind was thenceforth closed hermetically against all arguments to the contrary. The eloquence of Somers, the entreaties of Marlborough, and even the coaxing of the Duchess of Somerset were all alike thrown away. The Ministers were never in any real danger except when, urged on by the fears of their subordinates, they ventured to prefer a request that the Duchess and her husband, or at least the latter, might be dismissed from Court. The signs of anger that at once appeared in the countenance of their mistress warned them that they were treading upon dangerous ground, and with more prudence than had been formerly shown by their predecessors, they refrained from all further mention of the subject.*

Public attention was now turned chiefly towards the House of Lords. Nottingham, having fulfilled his engagements with the Whigs, was in haste to claim his reward. A week after the last-named division, he brought forward his cherished bill against occasional conformity, although under a new title and with some modifications for which the Whigs had stipulated. The bill was suffered to pass easily through both Houses, and the country became subject to the tyrannical law that any person holding an office for which he had qualified himself by taking the sacrament in the form prescribed by the Church, and who should be afterwards convicted of resorting to a conventicle for the purpose of worship, should forfeit forty pounds and his office. Seven years elapsed before the Whigs were able to repeal the wretched piece of legislation which they allowed their rivals to enact on this day.†

Nearly at the same time the Whigs of the Upper House obtained another triumph over their adversaries. Hamilton, since the accession of the Tories to power, had been a warm supporter of the Government, and his vast influence in Scotland had been exerted in a manner which gave deep offence to

* Swift wrote a lampoon on the Duchess of Somerset, called "the Windsor Prophecy." Mrs. Masham begged him to stop the impression for fear it should offend the Queen. But some printed copies did get abroad, and not improbably were seen by her Majesty.

† See a letter from Mr. Shower, an eminent Dissenting minister, to Oxford, December 8—19. "The fatal consequences of this bill," he says, "cannot be expressed. I dread to think of some of them." See also the answer of Oxford.

the opponents of the Ministry. He was now a principal favourite at Court, for his recent services were considered as more than an atonement for the very pardonable fault of his Jacobitism. During the past year several high posts in the county palatinate of Lancaster had been conferred upon him, and in the autumn he had received a patent creating him a peer of Great Britain with the title of Duke of Brandon. A caveat was, however, entered against his admission to the House as a peer of Great Britain, and this caveat was supported by the Whigs. Their argument was that his Grace was a peer of Scotland, and that the Act of Union had provided that sixteen of the Scottish peers only should sit in Parliament. Except, therefore, as a representative peer of his own country, a peer of Scotland was debarred from sitting and voting in the House of Lords. Her Majesty might undoubtedly bestow upon any of her subjects what title she pleased; but her prerogative to endow individuals with all the privileges of peers of Great Britain had been limited, as far as regarded peers of Scotland, by implication, if not by express words, by the Act of Union.

Anne again attended the House in the vain hope that her presence might have some effect in overawing the refractory members. Powys and Pratt, two of the most eminent lawyers of the day, were heard on behalf of the Duke, and a debate followed which lasted until what was then considered the late hour of eight in the evening. At length the House divided upon a motion to consult the judges upon this novel and purely legal question, which was carried in the negative by fourteen voices. It was then determined by a majority of five that a Scottish peer, created a peer of Great Britain since the Union, was incapable of admission in the latter capacity to the House.

The Whigs thus gained the day, and the victory seemed at that time not without importance. The Ministers were evidently embarrassed by finding themselves in a minority in the Upper House, and to what more convenient source could a Government in need of supporters resort for a supply of compliant peers than to the needy and venal peers of Scotland? The introduction to the House of men already noble

would occasion nothing like the scandal which would attach to the sudden elevation of Englishmen, and would probably be regarded by the country at large merely as a compensation to the Scottish peers for the privileges they had lost by the Union. Yet it is difficult to understand how such enlightened dispensers of justice as Somers and Cowper could reconcile it with their consciences to support their party in a cause for which the arguments were so weak. It had never been disputed before the Union that the prerogative to create peers was without limit, that the sovereign might, if he chose, bestow all the privileges of peerage upon a regiment of his guards, a colony of paupers, or a gang of convicts. And what was there to indicate any intention on the part of the Legislature to exclude the peers of Scotland from participating in a bounty which might be extended to every individual beside themselves in the three kingdoms? During the long debates which preceded the passing of the act, not a single member had, as far as any record remains, expressed even a wish to impose any limitations on this undoubted prerogative. On the contrary, there seems to have been some anticipation that the Union would be followed by the elevation to peerages of Great Britain of several of the peers of Scotland, who, it was rumoured, had been induced by promises held out to them by the Government to give their support to the measure. But that the Whigs themselves were at first unconscious that any restriction had been imposed on the prerogative is clearly shown by what afterwards happened. A year subsequent to the Union Queensberry was created a peer of Great Britain with the title of Duke of Dover. He entered the House of Lords unchallenged, sat and voted during two successive Parliaments, and once a resolution passed denying his right, while sitting as an English peer, to vote as a Scottish peer in the election of the Scottish representatives. It is impossible that Queensberry's right could have been more fully recognized, and Hamilton's case differed in no respect from Queensberry's. From the refusal of the Whigs to consult the judges upon a point so entirely within their province as the construction to be put upon an act of Parliament, it may be assumed that they were determined to take advantage of their majority, and close their understand-

ings to all considerations of law or justice.* There can be indeed no better exemplification than this case affords of the degeneration of principle which had been brought about by political strife in the minds of the leading men of that age. On the bench Somers and Cowper dispensed justice with impartiality and discernment which have moved the admiration of every successive generation of lawyers. But the moment they took their seats in the House, and surveyed the battle array of their opponents, the darkness of bigotry seemed to come over those brilliant intellects. The high-minded judges dwindled into mere partizans, mere automatons of a faction.

Notwithstanding, however, that the resolution had been carried by sheer force of numbers, it remained in operation for seventy years. It was not until 1782 that the eighth Duke of Hamilton again preferred a claim to sit in the House of Lords as Duke of Brandon. This time the judges were consulted, and their opinions were unanimous that the prerogative was not curtailed by the Act of Union, and that his Grace was entitled to all the privileges of a peer of Great Britain.

These triumphs of the Opposition produced, however, in the eyes of those who were connected with or dependent upon the Ministry, one good effect. They had roused Oxford to a proper sense of his danger. His friends, in mortal terror of the Whigs, and expecting each day that the Queen would be forced or coaxed into reinstating them in power, were half maddened to see the careless, easy-tempered statesman lolling and punning over his claret, and laughing at their gloomy faces and faint hearts. Two vigorous measures were now decided upon. In the first place it was determined to remove Marlborough from a position in which, by dint of his influence over the troops and in the cabinets of the Allied Powers, he might continually throw obstacles in the way of peace, and perhaps, by an exertion of his military genius, achieve some great victory which would have the effect of reviving the warlike enthusiasm of the nation. It was also determined to convert the House of Lords from a source of embarrassment into a convenient auxiliary by a large addition of peers.

* Burnet, and the notes of Onslow and Dartmouth.

No time was lost in putting the first of these measures in train. Upon the day succeeding the last-mentioned debate, the Commissioners for stating the public accounts laid upon the table of the Commons a report upon some practices they had detected in the accounts of the army. The report consisted of the evidence extracted from Sir Solomon de Medina about the perquisites upon the bread contracts, of the Duke's letter of explanation, and of some remarks of the Commissioners upon the evidence and the explanation. It was ordered that the report should be taken into consideration upon the 17th of January, and the next day the House adjourned until the 14th of that month. In compliance with the Queen's request the usual supplies for the army and navy had been already voted, and a land-tax bill at four shillings in the pound had been passed.

Oxford, for once in his life, saw the necessity of acting promptly. The Lords had adjourned only until the 2nd of January, and there was ample reason to dread the period of their reassembling. The Whigs were meditating addresses upon the subject of the peace, to which it would be embarrassing to furnish the Queen with an answer without putting her in direct antagonism to the House. The Scotch peers, enraged by a resolution which they considered derogatory to their order and a breach of the Union, were threatening to withdraw their aid from the Government unless that resolution were rescinded. Oxford's great difficulty was to find men so high in social position that scandal might not attach to their elevation to the peerage, and yet sufficiently compliant to be depended upon for their votes. To call up by writ the eldest sons of some of the existing peers was obviously the course which would excite least remark; but only two eldest sons, of the Earls of Northampton and Aylesbury, could be found adapted for the purpose. Ten more votes were necessary to ensure a majority to the Ministers. The list of the new creations Oxford settled with her Majesty without consulting at least one of his colleagues. Dartmouth, while attending the Queen upon business, was surprised by her drawing from her pocket a paper containing the names of twelve gentlemen, and directing him to prepare the necessary instruments for making them peers. Did

her Majesty design, was the question of the astonished Secretary, that they should all be made peers at once? Anne thought herself bound to offer some excuse for so extraordinary a proceeding. She saw, she observed, that the Duke of Marlborough and the Whigs were determined to distress her, and that she must do something to help herself. She liked this expedient as little as he did, but no one had been able to propose a better. All that Dartmouth could say was that he hoped it would prove a remedy, but that he feared both the House of Lords and the country would take it very ill.*

The names of the new peers were published in the *Gazette* of the 1st of January, 1712. There can be no doubt that the selection, although confined of course to the Tories, was judiciously made. The hurry in drawing up the patents was so great that in most of them the usual preamble containing the reasons for awarding the dignity was omitted. Yet with two exceptions only the new peers consisted of gentlemen whose claims to the honour of peerage would, under ordinary circumstances, have been considered strong. George Henry Hay, who had married a daughter of the Treasurer, was the son of one of the most eminent of the Scottish peers, and was the sitting member of a Cornish borough. Viscount Windsor, now created Baron Mountjoy, had been made a peer of Ireland by William for distinguished services in the Netherlands. Sir Thomas Willoughby, Allen Bathurst, Henry Paget, Sir Thomas Mansell, and George Granville were all men of ancient family and possessed of large landed estates. Thomas Foley, indeed, although long one of the leaders of his party, might be regarded almost as a new man. His grandfather had amassed a fortune as an ironmaster at Stourbridge, and his father had acquired territorial importance by a marriage with one of the wealthiest heiresses of the midland counties. The two exceptions to the rule were those of Sir Thomas Trevor and Samuel Masham. The former, as Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, had gained a high reputation for ability and integrity, but there are strong reasons why a judge should not be a peer, and Trevor retained his seat on the bench after being raised to the peerage. It is important that those whose duty it is to advise

* Dartmouth's note on Burnet.

Parliament upon questions of law should not themselves be members of Parliament. Masham was the eighth son of an Essexshire baronet, and was included in the list for no better reason than his being the husband of the favourite.

In the same gazette, beneath the names of the new peers, the public read the startling intimation that the Queen had dismissed Marlborough from all his employments. During the past fortnight scandal had been busy with the reputation of the great Duke. It was everywhere known that the Commissioners had detected numerous acts of peculation in his accounts, and people were wondering if it could be possible that the mighty warrior of whom they had felt so proud, could be after all but a low-minded pilferer whose heart was more intent upon robbing the nation and cheating the soldiers out of their bread than upon wresting an empire from the House of Bourbon. It is easy to believe that Marlborough, who had shown such keen sensitiveness to silly reflections upon his conduct and courage from the pens of anonymous pamphleteers, was acutely distressed when accusations, which had in truth some foundation, were made against him by men of official standing. He or his friends for him endeavoured to stem the tide of unpopularity by publishing in the *Daily Courant* the letter he had written to the Commissioners from the Hague. The Government, apparently annoyed by this attempt at defence, promptly retorted by publishing in the same journal the report of the Commissioners in full. A fresh reason of no small weight was now added to the many reasons the Ministers had for reducing Marlborough to a private station. It had been rumoured for some time that Prince Eugene intended to visit England in the hope that the splendour of his rank and fame would make that impression upon the mind of Anne which the memorial of Bothmar and the eloquence of Buys had failed to produce. The visit was exceedingly unwelcome both to the Queen and her Ministers, but could not, upon any graceful plea, be declined. The significant coldness with which the notice of his intention was received might have deterred the Prince, had he not been convinced of the necessity of conferring with the English sovereign in person by the representations of many of the leading statesmen in Europe. Successive reports had reached

London of his arrival at the Hague, of his presenting a memorial to the States-general against too hastily concluding a peace, and of his determination to embark for England.* The Ministers, under these circumstances, felt that no time was to be lost in their proceedings against Marlborough. They had no wish to see the two generals planning under their eyes some vigorous campaign for the purpose of rekindling enthusiasm and national animosities which would destroy all hopes of effecting a peace. Upon the last day of the year therefore Anne attended a council and ordered it to be entered in the books that, as an information against the Duke of Marlborough had been laid before the House of Commons, she thought fit to dismiss him from all employments in order that the matter might undergo impartial examination.†

This resolution Anne communicated on the following day to the Duke by a letter under her own hand. In a fit of unwonted passion he flung the epistle into the fire. That his indignation was just and natural few persons will now dispute. It may, indeed, be averred that his dismissal was necessary to the success of the conferences about to be opened at Utrecht; and those who are of opinion that he and the Whigs entertained most erroneous notions about the policy of continuing the war, and that peace upon the footing desired by the Ministers was really for the advantage of all Europe, cannot but regard his dismissal at this conjuncture as a public blessing. Yet the injustice to Marlborough is not the less apparent. His political enemies had, for the special objects of injuring him in the public esteem and affording a pretext for removing him from office, brought forward an accusation of peculation. Before the cause had been investigated by any tribunal a punishment not inadequate to the offence when proved to have been committed was inflicted upon him, and that by the hand of a sovereign whose reign he had rendered the most glorious in our annals. Anne, in her letter, made the same remark as she had made in dismissing Godolphin. She complained of the bad treatment she had met with from the Duke. Like her

* St. John's Correspondence with Strafford. "Your Excellency is to discourage as much as possible the Prince from coming over."

† Boyer.

father, she imagined that all persons who were so unfortunate as to differ from her own opinions, and went into constitutional opposition to her Ministers, were bad and disloyal subjects.

The reply of Marlborough was spirited but dignified. He complained of the injustice he suffered at the hands of his enemies when they could prevail upon her Majesty to impute the occasion of his dismissal to a false and malicious insinuation which he had had as yet no opportunity to repel. He professed his inability to comprehend in what manner his conduct could have given offence. If the reproach, he said, lay in his absenting himself from the Council, he was bound to acknowledge that his duty to her Majesty and the country prevented him from joining in the recommendations of a man who, in his opinion, offered the worst advice possible. He thought, and all men thought the same, that the friendship of France would be destructive to her Majesty, for there was in the French Court a root of enmity irreconcilable to the government and religion of these kingdoms. He concluded with a prayer that the Queen might never find the want of a servant so faithful as he had always endeavoured to prove himself.*

Some of the spoils of the fallen hero were distributed at once. The Tories could boast of but few military men of experience and reputation. The claims of Peterborough, formerly the object of their admiration, to wear the armour of Achilles undoubtedly stood first in order; but Peterborough, still absent on his mission to Vienna and Savoy, was passed over without acknowledgment. The Ministers, perhaps, had little desire to entangle themselves with a genius so eccentric and intractable. The more docile Ormond was selected as Marlborough's successor in the command of the first regiment of foot-guards, and was soon after gazetted Commander-in-Chief of the Forces in Great Britain. Rivers, whose military service had been very limited, was named Master of the Ordnance.

* Printed in the Conduct of the Duchess.

CHAPTER XI.

THERE had not been during this reign a day of such excitement as that on which the news of Marlborough's dismissal and of the creation of twelve new peers was announced to the world by the *London Gazette*. The Whigs felt at once that a heavy blow had been dealt to their hopes of frustrating the contemplated peace. But the exultation of the more sober portion of the Tory party was not unalloyed by misgivings. They might believe that Marlborough was a sordid, bad-hearted man, intent upon prolonging the miseries of his countrymen and of mankind for no better purpose than to fill his pockets. But was it prudent to dismiss the only great general the nation possessed before peace had been actually secured! Was it not to be apprehended that the French would take heart, that our armies, dispirited and discontented by the loss of their favourite leader, would give ground, and that one disastrous campaign would sweep away the advantages acquired in many tedious years of successful warfare?* It is to be noted, however, that these misgivings, which tempered the delight of more than one Tory who had been eager in instigating Oxford to vigorous measures, were not felt in the very quarter which, judging from previous experience, should have been most affected by them. Little more than a year back the displacement of a warlike Ministry by a Ministry notoriously inclined to make peace, had thrown the City into a state of panic. The intelligence of Marl-

* Swift's comments in his Journal to Stella may be regarded as typical of those of the ultra Tory party. "I confess my belief that he has not one good quality in the world besides that of a general, and even that I have heard deni d by several great soldiers. But we have had constant success in arms while he commanded. Opinion is a mighty matter in war, and I doubt the French think it impossible to conquer an army that he leads; and our soldiers think the same. And how far this step may encourage the French to play tricks with us no man knows." See also Swift's remarks in his History of the four last years of the Queen.

borough's dismissal now actually caused a rise in the price of stocks and shares.* It was evident that the opinions of the mercantile community had undergone a remarkable change. The little book in which Swift had set forth in terms terribly clear and convincing the rapacity of the Allies, and the subservience of the former Ministers to the interests of every country but their own, was in the hands of every one, and had accomplished its purpose beyond the most sanguine anticipations of its author.† One of its results had been to prepare the minds of all men to receive charges of fraud and peculation against those who, but a little while since, had been regarded as models of integrity; and when it transpired that the Commissioners for stating the public accounts had detected something suspicious in the General's money dealings, there was no want of believers in his guilt. The hero, by a sudden revulsion of popular feeling, was cast down from his pedestal, and execrated for a villain and a public robber. It was in vain that friendly writers endeavoured to entice back sympathy for him by dwelling on the glories of Blenheim and Ramilies, and drawing comparisons between him and the ungratefully treated general of Justinian. People obstinately refused to see any resemblance between the hard-hearted tyrant of the Roman empire and a queen whose only fault it was to be too good-natured and forbearing towards her servants; nor was the similitude considered perfect between Marlborough, loaded with wealth and honours, and Belisarius wandering naked and blind through the streets of Constantinople. The effect of his dismissal upon the City seems to have been to inspire a hope that, now the man whose object it was to foster the war had been rendered harmless, peace would really be accomplished upon fair terms.‡

* Lettres Historiques.

† On the 5th December Swift writes—"They are now printing the fourth edition, which is reckoned very extraordinary considered 'tis a dear twelve-penny book, and not bought up in numbers by the party to give away as the Whigs do, but purely upon its own strength." It was published on the 27th November. On the 28th January he writes that eleven thousand copies had been sold.

‡ The Life and History of Belisarius was written by Oldmixon. "No Queen or no General," is perhaps the best, certainly the longest treatise against Marlborough. But it would be a waste of time and labour to enumerate the host of scurrilous ballads and satires published against him about this time.

It is worthy of remark that a report that Marlborough was on the point of being disgraced was current in Paris a fortnight before his dismissal was announced: The relations between the Governments of England and France were at this period upon a footing of unreserved confidence to which the relations between the two countries have never since borne, and perhaps never will again, bear comparison. From the time Ménager returned to France, a secret correspondence had been carried on between the English and French Ministers. Oxford and St. John kept Torcy regularly informed of the instructions they gave to Strafford, and of the machinations of Buys, Marlborough, the Hanoverian Minister, and the Whigs. Louis, in return, transmitted to England the information rendered by his spies from all parts of Europe. In truth, the King, long accustomed to be regarded as a kind of monster beyond the pale of mercy, was charmed and softened by the amicable spirit of Anne and her Government. He no longer, as Torcy expressed it, regarded that princess as an enemy, but as a discreet friend, who might be entrusted with important secrets and relied upon to make a proper use of her information. During the month of November, the English Ministers, anxious to have some outline of the terms his Majesty was disposed to grant to the Allies generally, dispatched Gaultier to Versailles. The King sent him back with a memorial which was, in all sincerity, a rough draft of the instructions he intended to give his plenipotentiaries at the Congress. He intimated his willingness to give the Dutch a barrier sufficient to quiet all their apprehensions on the score of France, if they, on their part, would contribute in good faith to the re-establishment of peace. He would furthermore allow them considerable commercial advantages if they would assist him in a matter which he had greatly at heart, the restoration of his ally, the Elector of Bavaria, to all the dominions and property of which he had been despoiled on account of his adhering to the cause of France. As regarded the empire he would yield fort Kehl, restore Brisach, and demolish all the works he had erected on the Rhine, but conditionally upon the Emperor agreeing to re-instate the brothers, the Electors of Bavaria and Cologne. This prominent anxiety that his supporters should not suffer

for their fidelity to him, would appear a noble trait in the character of Louis, did we not reflect how much his pride was concerned in the matter, for Maximilian dethroned was a visible monument of his own defeat. But mingled with that love of displaying his power which may have been the first incentive of the vain monarch, we cannot doubt that there were sentiments truly chivalric and generous. The cause of the Duke of Savoy created some difficulty. The English Ministers espoused his claims more warmly than was agreeable to the master of France, whose feelings had been deeply wounded by the conduct of this prince. He refused absolutely to cede to him any towns in the Alps, but stated that he had no objection to see him aggrandized in Italy.*

The day, the 1st of January, fixed for the opening of the Congress, now drew near. There had been so much delay in extorting from Buys the passports for the French plenipotentiaries, that it was evident these personages could not arrive in time. Towards the end of the year, however, the Bishop of Bristol, who had been appointed the first of the English plenipotentiaries, took his departure for Holland. Doctor Robinson had gone out in the year 1683 as chaplain to the English embassy at the Court of Sweden. There he had remained during a quarter of a century, regarded by the Government at home less in the light of a clergyman than as an useful and industrious political agent. He had, in the absence of the ambassador, filled the posts first of resident and then of envoy-extraordinary at the same Court. He returned to England in 1708 with the double reputation of being a profound diplomatist and a sound Churchman, having signalized his piety by defending his countrymen against a charge of atheism which had been made against them by some continental scribbler. He made good progress in the favour of Anne, and was successively raised to the deanery of Windsor and the see of Bristol. It does not seem, however, to have entered the thoughts of the Ministers to employ him in a civil capacity until a combination of circumstances left them but little choice. Shrewsbury had, with his usual prudence, declined any part in arranging a treaty which he foresaw would be an unpopular one. The

* Mémoires de Torcy; Correspondence between Torcy and St. John.

appointment of Newcastle, who held the privy seal, was then contemplated; but during the autumn, and in the midst of the conferences with Ménager, the Duke died suddenly from the effects of an accident. The Ministers then turned to Jersey, one of the staunchest friends of the Government, but, in a few days after, the Earl was also snatched away by a stroke of apoplexy. It had then seemed as if the only choice lay between Nottingham and other high Tory noblemen of doubtful friendship. In the emergency, Oxford bethought himself of the Bishop. The appointment of an ecclesiastic to a diplomatic post might wear an appearance of singularity; yet, as far as real qualifications for the office went, few lay Englishmen could boast of so many. The Bishop's acquaintance with the Sovereigns, the Ministers, and the complicated politics of the northern Courts was unrivalled, and on many occasions his diligence, discretion, and good-humour had achieved a triumph. In September, therefore, the privy seal was confided to him with a seat at the Council board, and Ménager was informed that he would probably be one of the plenipotentiaries. His appointment to this important duty gave general satisfaction, except to those inveterate Whigs who, in their eagerness to disparage every person in the service of the Government, muttered that a bishop would be better employed in looking after his flock at home than in ruffling it abroad with the pomp and state of a plenipotentiary.*

Strafford, who had been for many years ambassador at the Court of Berlin, was named the second plenipotentiary. Oxford seems fully to have intended that Prior should have been a third with instructions to devote his attention specially to the interests of British commerce, a subject which neither Strafford nor the Bishop were quite competent to handle. But the patrician blood of the nobleman who could trace his ancestors from the Conquest, and who stood in the relationship of grand-nephew to the famous proud Earl, fired up at the bare suggestion of being joined in a commission with the son of a vintner. The Ministers were compelled, therefore, to forego the assistance of a servant who, in their opinion at least, was a valuable one.

* See the remarks of Boyer.

Upon the 2nd of January the Lords re-assembled. The new members were introduced, and their patents, which, in the hurry of drawing them up, were nearly all alike, were read to the House. Opposition to an exertion of the prerogative which although extraordinary was still perfectly legal, there could of course be none; but a laugh was raised by a quip of Wharton, who asked whether it was intended that the twelve should vote individually or by their foreman. The Lord Keeper then delivered a message from the Queen, intimating her desire that the House should adjourn until the 14th of the month, the day fixed for the re-assembling of the Commons, when matters of great importance would be communicated to both Chambers. A warm debate arose as to the advisability of complying with her Majesty's commands in this instance. It was contended that a message to adjourn addressed to one branch of the legislature alone was without precedent. The invariable practice of the Sovereign had been to direct the adjournment or the prorogation of both Houses together. If the Lords submitted to such an innovation it might give rise to the Sovereign adjourning one House while the other was left sitting, to the utter ruin of the constitution. Upon the motion to adjourn being put, however, it was carried by thirteen votes. The question was scarcely one upon which parties could bring their respective strength to a fair trial. Many Whigs, disinclined to commit the indecorum of refusing obedience to the royal commands, either absented themselves or joined their voices to the ministerial party. Some Tories, on the other hand, voted against the motion, from a conviction that the message was an encroachment upon the liberty of the House.*

The bold remedy, however, adopted by the Government had already convinced the Whigs of the futility of their offering any further opposition in Parliament. It was plain that Ministers who could stretch the power of the Crown so far as to create twelve new peers together for the purpose of obtaining a majority, would not scruple, if that number should prove insufficient, to proceed with their creations until their object was accomplished. In the eyes of all men, indeed, the cause of the Whigs seemed now so desperate that a timid and credu-

* Burnet; Boyer; Lettres Historiques.

lous public began to imagine that the party must be revolving desperate expedients. It was by this time known in London that Eugene was on the seas, and there was a variety of alarming rumours in circulation as to the object of his visit. He was coming, it was said, to the assistance of Marlborough and the Whigs. The conspirators had already concerted their plans, and fearful scenes were about to open. According to one story the Duke was to meet the Prince on Blackheath at the head of a troop of horse. The two generals would enter London side by side: the mob would be excited by agents of the Whigs: the houses of the leading Tories would be attacked; and mob and soldiers together would perpetrate a series of outrages for the purpose of overawing the Queen and her Ministers.*

Those Ministers were themselves not without grave apprehensions as to the effect which would be produced on the populace by the sight of a conqueror so renowned. They had done their utmost to avert the threatened visit. A peremptory refusal to admit to the shores of England a person who came in the capacity of ambassador from a friendly power, and against whom it was impossible to allege one substantial objection, was out of the question. But every method short of positively declining his visit was employed to deter the Prince from embarking. Strafford, according to orders, informed him that although, if he were merely bent on diverting himself in London, he should be welcome, her Majesty was determined that the arrangements for the forthcoming campaign should be made only at the Hague, and that in her opinion he would best advance the interests of the common cause by remaining where he was. Eugene replied simply that his chief commission was to improve the friendly relations existing between his master and her Majesty, and pressed for a yacht and convoy. He applied for a passage to the captain of a British ship which lay off the Brill, and was politely referred to the Ambassador. Strafford, thus driven, endeavoured to shift the embarrassment from his own shoulders by writing to the captain an ambiguous letter, which that officer interpreted, however, as a per-

* Boyer; Mémoires de Torcy; Macpherson, original papers. Swift says the Whigs designed to have met him with forty thousand men.

mission to receive the Prince. Accompanied by his nephew and a small suite of German noblemen Eugene set sail on the 28th of December, was driven back by contrary winds, and was scarcely out of sight of land for the second time, when a Queen's messenger reached Strafford with letters directing him to make such representations to the Prince as, it was thought at Whitehall, must surely have the effect of compelling him to abandon his projected visit. It was not until a whole week had been passed on shipboard that the tempest-tossed hero found himself in calm water, and was cheered by the sight of Gravesend. His approach had been signalled to London, and two gentlemen from the Secretary's office were in attendance with a Government barge. The Prince was already in possession of one melancholy piece of intelligence. The pilot, who had been taken on board at the mouth of the river, had communicated the news of Marlborough's dismissal from all his posts. During the voyage up to London one of the gentlemen dropped a hint to him that the less attention he showed to his old coadjutor the better pleased the Queen would be. But of this his Highness did not condescend to take the least notice. His affection for Marlborough was sincere; and had his personal feelings been less engaged, the cause which had drawn down upon his brother-general the royal displeasure, was the very one he had come to England to support. The first visit, therefore, he received at Leicester House was from Marlborough, and it was the first visit he returned. Yet the convincing proofs the Queen and her Ministers had just shown of their determination to make peace in despite of Whigs and Continental statesmen must have speedily driven all hopes of success from his breast. Upon the Sunday after his arrival he was admitted to an audience; but neither from the words nor the looks of Anne could he derive any favourable augury. Her Majesty received him with cold politeness. The state of her health, she remarked, would prevent her from seeing as much of him as she could wish; "but these gentlemen," she added, pointing to Oxford and St. John, "have orders to confer with you as often as you think proper."*

The desire of all classes to catch a sight of the hero was

* St. John to Strafford, January 8—19; Boyer.

intense. During the ten weeks he continued in England Leicester House was besieged from morning till night by noble visitors, adherents of the Tory party being scarcely less assiduous than the Whigs. Every drawing-room where it was expected that the Prince would make his appearance was crowded to suffocation; and his chair, in its passage through the streets, was constantly attended by an enthusiastic throng of hero-worshippers, such as he could have remarked in no other country but this. The caresses, indeed, which were heaped upon him by high and low contrasted sadly with the marks of contempt which it had now become the fashion to bestow upon Marlborough. Upon the festival of the Queen's birthday a mob had collected round a closed chair in the Park, which was supposed to contain the Prince. The moment, however, that the Duke was recognised as the occupant, the acclamations ceased, and the air rang with cries of "Stop thief!"* The downfall of the great Englishman had been followed by an aggravated eruption of ballads and pamphlets about him, and the flow of scurrility which the hope of obtaining a guinea from the Ministers could inspire in the authors of that age is truly amazing. That Marlborough was a miser, a cheat, and a villain were old charges once cautiously whispered, but which it seemed now perfectly safe to proclaim from the house-tops. That he was a coward was an accusation which must at first have sounded strangely, but which might soon pass muster by dint of repetition. But some invention was required to demonstrate that the villain and coward could easily be spared from the army: Literary genius was reduced to the necessity of asserting that his victories were nothing but accidents. His singular successes, it was boldly maintained, had once been regarded by simple people as proofs of military talent; but the world had now grown wiser, and could discern in them nothing but proofs of his good fortune. The civilities which were constantly passing between the two heroes gave great irritation to the tribe of poets, who at length assailed the Prince with their stings. His own pure reputation afforded no hold for scandal; but ballads were written about his mother, whose complicity in some of the darkest crimes of the seventeenth century had once

* Macpherson, original papers.

been suspected by the French Government, and hawkers were employed to sing them in the streets. Happily the Prince's ignorance of our language was complete. Had he comprehended a tithe of what was said and written concerning Marlborough, the rest of his life must have been spent in wondering whether a people so capricious, so ungrateful to their most talented and successful servants, and more foul-mouthed than any known race of savages could, by any stretch of fancy, be considered a civilised nation. But his generous heart swelled with disdain whenever compliments were offered to himself at the expense of his friend. At a dinner given by Oxford, that Minister referred to him as the greatest general of the age. "If I am so," returned the modest hero, "I owe it to the kindness of your Lordship in removing a rival." Burnet once took the trouble of translating to the Prince an article in a Tory periodical in which the writer was good enough to allow that Marlborough had been once fortunate. "The greatest praise," remarked Eugene, "that could possibly be given him, for it follows that all his other successes were owing to his conduct."

On the 17th of January the Parliament re-assembled. Anne was disabled from attending in person by an attack of gout; but in a message she alluded triumphantly to the circumstance that the conferences had actually commenced at Utrecht as affording evidence that no separate peace, as men of evil intention had given out, had ever been in contemplation. The Commons, after voting the customary addresses, proceeded at once to business. It was soon manifest that the advent of Eugene, the object of so many hopes and fears, had sharpened the hostility of the dominant party against the Whigs. Walpole was the first victim upon whom their wrath fell. His great abilities as a debater and financier, the estimation in which he was held by his party, the industry and knowledge he had displayed in defending by his pen the previous Administration against the charge of misapplying the revenues, singled him out as one whose political ruin it was desirable to accomplish. The Commissioners for stating the public accounts had, therefore, closely scrutinized his actions, and had discovered that he, like Marlborough, had received perquisites. As Secretary at War he had accepted contracts for supplying the troops of North

Britain with forage, and under the show of reserving a share for a friend, had been paid by the contractors sums amounting to nearly a thousand pounds. The important facts in this case were not disputed. Walpole himself admitted that, in accepting the contracts, he had stipulated that his friend Robert Mann should have a share, and that the contractors, in preference to receiving a partner in a lucrative business, had paid him money. His defence was simply that he had duly accounted for that money to Mann.* A reader of the present generation may think that, as the public was clearly defrauded, it was immaterial whether the Minister or his friend profited by the transaction, and that an indelible stigma of dishonesty should have been placed upon Walpole. But the morality of that age was less rigid than that of our own, and an absurd distinction seems to have been drawn between an official who took advantage of his position to enrich himself and an official who merely took care of his friends. The former committed, indeed, a mean and dishonourable action; but the latter was commonly thought to do only a good-natured thing. At all events Walpole's justification was regarded by his party as complete, and he was considered a martyr to Tory spite. Great exertions were made to save him. The debate was protracted to a most unusual hour. But it was impossible to make head against so overwhelming a preponderance of enemies. By a large majority Walpole was pronounced guilty of a high breach of trust, and of notorious corruption. It was also resolved that he should be committed to the Tower as a prisoner. A subsequent resolution, carried, however, by much smaller numbers, expelled him from the House.

Marlborough was the second victim. A week after the decision against Walpole the Commons took into consideration that part of the report of the Commissioners which affected the Duke. That a stigma should be formally placed upon him might seem no more than necessary to justify the ignominious treatment to which he had been subjected. His case, as regarded the bread contracts, was not essentially dissimilar from Walpole's; but it will perhaps be thought that his justifica-

* The report of the Commissioners is printed in the Appendix to Boyer. Burnet and the notes to his History; Swift's Four Last Years.

tion, if we admit the truth of its allegation, is entitled to great respect; for although the accepting of perquisites might be unwarrantable, those perquisites had been, according to his solemn asseverations, applied to the public service. One witness the House condescended to hear on his behalf. Sir John Germaine gave testimony, as regarded the statement that the perquisite was a customary one of the commanders-in-chief in Flanders, that it had been accepted by Prince Waldeck. The debate lasted from three in the afternoon till nearly midnight; yet the result of the division proved the hopelessness of attempting to protect the great Duke from those who were determined to disgrace him. Two adverse resolutions were carried by a majority of no less than a hundred and five votes. The first of these declared that the taking of sums annually by the Duke of Marlborough from the contractors for furnishing bread and bread-waggons in the Low Countries was unwarrantable and illegal; the second, that the deduction of two and a half per cent. from the pay of the foreign troops in her Majesty's service was public money and ought to be accounted for. Both resolutions were at once communicated to the Queen. Her answer was that she had great regard for whatever was presented to her by the Commons, and would do her part to redress what was complained of.*

The Ministers were satisfied with this success. Their arch enemy was now absolutely at their mercy. A word from them to the Queen, and the Attorney-General would institute a ruinous suit against him for the restitution of half a million of money. But they prudently determined that they had already pushed matters far enough against a man once so popular; and mindful of the capriciousness of public feeling, were disposed to take no advantage for the present of their power. The weapon should remain in its sheath so long as Marlborough chose to remain quiet. But if he were found intriguing with their enemies, and stirring up opposition to the peace, then it

* St. John to Strafford, January 27, February 7. "What passed on Thursday in the House of Commons will, I hope, show people abroad as well as at home, that no merit, no grandeur, no riches can excuse or save anyone who sets himself up against the Queen. The whole debate was so managed as to show evidently to what the Duke was to ascribe his fall."

should be brought out and used against him.* They now proceeded to substantiate by formal votes of the House of Commons all those allegations as to the wrongs England had suffered at the hands of the late Ministry, which they had, through Swift's instrumentality, already promulgated to the world in the "Conduct of the Allies." At their instigation the various treaties into which her Majesty had entered were called for, were taken into consideration, and the public were soon apprized of the sense of the House by a string of resolutions. It was pronounced that not one of those numerous Powers who were confederated against France had fulfilled its engagements with this country. The Dutch, in addition to shifting upon England their proportion of the subsidies it was necessary to pay to the poorer Allies, had failed to an absurd extent to supply their quota both of ships and soldiers. Very nearly the whole charges of the war in Spain and Portugal had been defrayed by her Majesty; for the burden of maintaining what Imperial regiments appeared in those countries had always been thrown upon her. The King of Portugal, it was discovered, pocketed annually a large subsidy without making an effort to recruit that force on the Spanish frontier for which the subsidy was granted. But the strongest indignation of the House was reserved for that barrier treaty which had been so absurdly approved and signed by Townshend. Under that compact, had it been executed, the Dutch would have become virtually masters of the entire Netherlands. Provinces unsurpassed for their fertility, and cities reputed the wealthiest in Europe, won from the enemy chiefly by the energy and sacrifices of Englishmen, would have gone to swell the riches and power of a nation which had only contributed in a secondary degree to the expense of the war. But that England should get nothing and the Dutch everything was the least part of the grievance. The injury to British trade which must have ensued if the authority of the Republic had been permitted to establish itself over the Netherlands was beyond calculation. Without doubt the markets of the Spanish cities of that region would speedily

* Swift to Archbishop King, March 29, April 9. "There was never the least design of a new impeachment against the Duke of Marlborough; and it was his own great weakness or the folly of his friends that the thing went so far as it did."—St. John to Strafford, January 18—29.

have been closed by prohibitive duties against the competition of English merchants. Had the treaty, therefore, come into operation, England would have found, as a principal result of a war which had entailed upon her a debt of fifty millions, that she had lopped off a great branch of her commerce, and bestowed it upon her rival. Still more infamous did the treaty appear when the interests of Charles were taken into consideration. What could be more iniquitous than that, while England and Holland were proclaiming to the whole world their determination to seat him on the Spanish throne, they should be in secret settling between themselves that one of them should take the most valuable portion of the Spanish dominions to her own use?

Swift had already, at the instigation of the Ministers, enlightened the public upon this point in "Some Remarks upon the Barrier Treaty." The Commons were, therefore, sufficiently primed with information, and soon came to some severe resolutions. It was decided that the Barrier Treaty contained several articles destructive to the trade and interest of Great Britain, and that Townshend, who had negotiated and signed it, and those persons who had advised her Majesty to ratify it, were enemies to the Queen and the kingdom.

The substance of all these resolutions was embodied in a representation containing some sharp reflections upon the late Government.* In one paragraph it was computed that during the war her Majesty had paid no less than nineteen millions sterling above her stipulated quotas. This was true, but justice to the Whigs requires that the other side of the case should be stated. There can be no doubt that England contributed not only her own share in the war, but made up for the shortcomings of her Allies as well. But had she behaved with less liberality and put forth less energy, what would have been the result of the contest? There is the strongest probability that it would have terminated to the disgrace of all the members of the Confederacy, that Holland and the Empire would both have been overrun, that France would have secured an enormous addition of strength, and that Louis, enraged by the interference of England in affairs in which he considered she had

* Printed in the Appendix to Boyer.

no concern, and encouraged by her weakness in pursuing a quarrel of her own seeking, would have sent the Pretender to her shores with an army. The war against Louis XIV. bears a close analogy to the war against Napoleon. The same question arises as to the policy of this country in 1793 as in 1702. Was it wise, was it prudent to provoke the wrath of the most powerful nation of the Continent? A retrospect of the history of the last eight hundred years cannot but establish an impression that the Powers of the Continent, although prone to attack each other, are always disposed to leave England alone if England will only abstain from meddling with them. She has been almost invariably the first to declare war, and that historian must be a partial one who will not admit that she has almost invariably given the balance of provocation. But the step once taken her honour and even her safety are concerned in putting forth her whole strength in the contest. Her haughty disregard for money, her stern determination to win, produced in both the wars above mentioned results which never could have happened if she had condescended to chaffer with her Allies about her fair share of the burden. It has been constantly seen that in proportion as her Allies, exhausted by the endlessness and apparent hopelessness of the struggle, dropped fainting from her side, her arm waxed mightier and more mighty. The ocean was covered with her fleets: her soldiers, mere ploughboys at the commencement of the war, speedily became such an army as for steadiness and courage had not its equal in the world, and sinking nations were revived by the magic of her gold. The end has always been attained, the liberties of Europe have been rescued, the ambition of France has been curbed, and England, putting off the trappings of military pride, has set herself down with her usual phlegm to earn money to pay the bill she has incurred by her sympathy with the oppressed, her pugnacity, or her love of glory.

The representation was received by Anne with much graciousness. It was a further instance, she remarked, of the dutiful affection to her service and concern for the public interest which that House of Commons had always shown.

With a Parliament so compliant and a Queen so resolute to support her Ministers, the latter, it might have been supposed,

would have troubled themselves little about opposition outside the Houses. Yet the attitude of that party which now clustered round Eugene kept them in constant perturbation. Leicester House had again become what it had been during the residence of Gallas, the head-quarters of those persons who were bent on opposing the peace. Marlborough, the Hanoverian envoy, and the Whig lords were continually assembling there. The only outcome of their deliberations, as far as appearances went, was the presentation by the Prince of memorials to the English Government containing spirited vindications of the Emperor from the charge of languor; and offers that the Imperial force should in future be largely increased, that the troops in Spain should be raised to thirty thousand men, and that his Majesty should bear a fourth of the cost of the war in that country. But the Ministers could not dismiss their apprehension that more dangerous matter was being revolved by the enemies of peace than these harmless documents, and it was not long before a person appeared who professed his ability to give intelligence of what passed at these meetings.

He was a man of many names; but to the name of John Plunket he appears to have had a better right than to the other appellations which he assumed, or which were bestowed upon him in the course of his profession as a political agent and spy. He had been for a length of time in the service of the Jacobites. His personal acquaintance with the statesmen of many countries was so extensive as in itself to furnish no bad illustration of the facility with which Jacobite agents could approach men of the highest position. By generals and divines, by English, Dutch, and French ministers, Plunket seems invariably to have been received with politeness; plied with anxious inquiries after the health of James, and dismissed with promises of support, not perhaps sincere but always fervent. His ugliness was so great that one Jacobite in sending him to another sometimes thought it necessary to apologize for employing so repulsive a messenger, and to assure his friend that although the man might wear the appearance of stupidity his looks belied him. The downfall of the Whig Administration, which comprised some inflexible Hanoverians, with whom it was felt to be useless to tamper, had considerably revived the

spirits of the Pretender's party. A notion had got possession of their minds that Oxford was at heart a Jacobite, though his timidity or prudence restrained him from expressing his sentiments in downright language. They were, therefore, inclined to give cordial support to his administration, and to strengthen his hands with all their power against the machinations of his Whig opponents. Plunket, aware of the uneasiness with which the Ministers regarded Eugene and the circle at Leicester House, perhaps concluded that, if he did the former an apparently friendly turn at this conjuncture, it would much promote their good-will towards the exiled dynasty. In March, therefore, he wrote to Oxford, enclosing what he declared to be copies of two letters written by the Prince and sent to Count Zinzendorf, the Imperial ambassador at the Hague, for transmission to Vienna. Various schemes had, according to these letters, been discussed for upsetting the Government and frustrating the intended peace, and Plunket tried to give to his fabrications a face of probability by ascribing to each general a method of executing his purpose in accordance with his reputed character. The plan of Eugene was that of a bold, impulsive nature, impatient of stratagems and delay and indifferent to danger. Some houses near St. James's were to be set on fire, and amid the general confusion the two generals would appear at the head of a strong party in arms. To make themselves masters of the Tower and the Treasury, and to secure the person of the Queen, would be a work of no great difficulty. Her Majesty would then be compelled to dissolve the Parliament, and to summon a new one to inquire into the secret negotiations with France. Marlborough was of opinion that Oxford and St. John should be taken off by assassination; but the deed was to be done in such a manner as to avert suspicion from the political opponents of the Ministers. The Londoners were first to be accustomed to outrages in their streets. He recommended that a gang should be sent about at night-time to assault and wound people indifferently, so that when the real quarry was struck, the crime might wear something of a fortuitous appearance.* What was actually passing under

* These forgeries are printed in the Macpherson papers, and in the Mémoires de Torcy. See also in Bolingbroke's Correspondence "the substance of two

Plunket's observation at the time no doubt suggested this last scheme to his imagination. The streets of the metropolis had never been safe to passengers after nightfall owing to the thieves which infested them; and in addition to this ordinary peril a practice had during the reign of Charles II. sprung up among the dissolute gentry of the period of sallying out in bands and knocking down every man and insulting every female they encountered. There had been of late a more than usual number of such outrages, and they were commonly attributed to a gang of fashionable scoundrels who styled themselves, after the name of a cruel Indian tribe, Mohawks. So heated were then the passions of parties, and so ready was each party to attribute any villainy to the other, that many Tories were persuaded that the Mohawks were organized by the Whigs, and for a political purpose.*

Plunket was no stranger to Oxford. He had before given information to the Treasurer, some of which may possibly have been true and of value. But Eugene's letters were too palpable and clumsy a fabrication to deceive for a moment a man of ordinary sense. The spy, nettled at finding a communication which he expected would have excited boundless gratitude passed over without acknowledgment, forwarded some more copies of the letters to two members of the Cabinet, the Jacobite Duke of Buckinghamshire, with whom he must have been well acquainted, and to Lord Keeper Harcourt. By these persons the matter was, much to Oxford's annoyance, laid before the Council, and Plunket was summoned and interrogated. He asserted that he derived his information through a clerk in Zinzendorf's suite at the Hague. He was then dismissed with a half-contemptuous direction to go over to Holland, and try and bring back his friend. The manner of the Councillors seems to have convinced the rascal that they did not believe a word of his story, and that his speculation, therefore, had been a failure. He departed, and did not think it advisable to return.

The revelations of Plunket were, however, communicated by

different accounts sent by P. Eugene to the Court of Vienna and the Count Zinzendorf."

* For an account of the Mohawks or Hawcubites see Boyer, and two numbers of the *Spectator*.

St. John to the French Government, and in such words that the Ministers of Louis could not but suppose that, preposterous as the story might seem to them, it obtained credit in England. The object of the English Ministers is but too apparent. They wanted to curry favour with the King of France by expatiating upon and magnifying the dangers they ran in trying to conclude peace against the wishes of a powerful faction that would not hesitate to resort to assassination if constitutional means failed.*

In the middle of March, Eugene, after prolonging his stay in London for upwards of two months, took his departure. He could have arrived at no other conclusion than that his mere name, popular and respected as it was, could not support a falling cause and party. The behaviour of the Queen and of her Ministers towards him personally left him no just cause of complaint. Anne, indeed, admitted him but seldom to her presence, an apparent neglect for which, however, the really indifferent state of her health afforded a sufficient excuse. Upon her birthday she presented him with a sword, the hilt of which was studded with diamonds to the value, it was said, of four or five thousand pounds. The Ministers chose, as far as politeness would allow, to evade discussions with him on the subject of his memorials. They thought, however, that they might safely submit his proposals to the Parliament. The Commons were informed in a royal message of the offers his Imperial Majesty had made to supply three-quarters of the troops for carrying on the war in Spain, and to bear one-fourth of the expenses. The message was received in silence; and without noticing it, even by the customary mode of returning thanks, the House passed on to other business. A fortnight after experiencing this mortification the Prince returned to the Hague.†

But while every impediment to the conclusion of peace was disappearing at home, things were not proceeding so satisfactorily at Utrecht. The English were the first to make their appearance, though not much before the Dutch, French and Savoyard ministers. The Republic was represented by no less

* Mémoires de Torcy. It is wonderful how a statesman of his experience could have attached credit to such tales.

† Boyer. During the Prince's stay in England his nephew, who accompanied him, died of the smallpox.

than eight of its citizens, six of the provinces sending each a single plenipotentiary, while the superior dignity of Holland was maintained by Buys and Vanderdussen. That Buys, the determined enemy of France, and the close ally of the Whigs, should have been appointed to uphold the interests of his countrymen at this congress, seemed not a little ominous of misunderstanding between the various Powers. He had quitted England almost in disgrace. At his last interview with the Privy Council, the Treasurer had informed him that during his residence in the country he had conducted himself more like an incendiary than the ambassador of a friendly state.* The plenipotentiaries of Louis were Uxelles, Polignac, and Ménager. Of the three Torcy communicated to the English Government that Polignac possessed the greater measure of his Majesty's confidence.

It was not until the 29th of January (New Style) that the first conference took place. Hitherto the time had been passed by the plenipotentiaries in paying complimentary visits to each other, and in drawing up some necessary regulations for the prevention of quarrels between their servants. It was agreed on all hands to waive those privileges which screen the establishments of foreign Powers from the local tribunals of justice, and that whenever a disturbance occurred the offenders should be abandoned to the civil authorities of the town. Each plenipotentiary, moreover, engaged to issue such orders to his coachmen and footmen as, it might be hoped, would preclude a fight when their masters' carriages happened to meet in a narrow passage. Which of two pedestrians who encountered each other in the streets should take the wall was not thought a matter too trivial to be the subject of an agreement.† The wisdom of these provisions was shown by their fruit. Although the town was crowded by foreigners for more than a twelvemonth few serious breaches of the peace occurred.

To induce the Emperor to send plenipotentiaries had been a

* Mémoires de Torcy. The Queen made Buys a present, however, of a thousand pounds. St. John says that the Ministers parted with him on terms of the greatest civility. The reproaches must then have been made with more delicacy than Torcy relates.

† Lettres Historiques; Boyer; Lamberty.

work of some difficulty. The Court of Charles had been thrown into a state of high indignation by the report that the English and French Governments were in collusion. For the last nine years the English—such was the opinion at Vienna—had been very properly exerting themselves, not perhaps so much as was their duty, but still with energy and success, to restore the august House of Austria to that superiority in Europe which it enjoyed in the days of Charles V. And now it seemed that capricious and unaccountable people were about to desert the cause, and expected that other nations should follow their lead in obsequiousness to France. From the moment, therefore, that the articles for a general peace reached the Austrian capital, and that it became manifest that Spain was to remain in Philip's possession, the Imperial statesmen were all on the alert. Circular letters were sent to the princes of the Empire exhorting them to remain firm to their engagements. Negotiations were opened with the United Provinces. The States-general were requested to join with his Majesty in praying the Queen of Great Britain not to sully the glory of her reign and to sacrifice the welfare of her subjects by accepting the proposals of a perfidious monarch. But it was impossible for the counsellors of Charles altogether to lose sight of the real impotence of their master if he were thrown upon his own resources; and as the English Government seemed determined that there should be, at all events, a congress, they at length judged it prudent to conform to circumstances. An assurance was furnished to the Emperor that the proposals which had been made by France would not be regarded in the light of preliminaries, and upon that understanding Charles sent plenipotentiaries to Utrecht. High words arose between the Imperialists and the French upon the very first day that the former attended the congress. Zinzendorf insisted that the object of the present meeting was to resume the conferences at the point where they had broken off at Gertruydenburg, a piece of vanity and presumption which kindled indignation in the breasts of Polignac, Uxelles, and Ménager. Uxelles remarked upon one occasion the difficulty of conducting business in the absence of any representative of the King of Spain. "I myself am that person," said Zinzendorf. "I acknowledge no other King of Spain

than Philip," retorted the Frenchman, and a lively altercation ensued.*

At length, on the 11th of February, the French, after a good deal of fencing, put forward their own proposals for a general peace. His Majesty's concessions to England were first in order. Louis engaged to acknowledge the Queen, and the succession to the crown of Great Britain, in whatever form she might wish, as soon as the treaty of peace was signed. The fortifications of Dunkirk should be abolished if an equivalent were allowed to his Majesty. He would yield up the island of St. Christopher and the territories of Hudson's Bay, provided Nova Scotia were restored to the French crown; and he would surrender all claims upon Newfoundland except the privilege of catching and drying fish. All other questions which there might be between the two Powers should be arranged in a treaty of commerce to be made, at the choice of England, either before or after the conclusion of the treaty of peace.

The barrier which Louis was willing to offer the Dutch was to consist of the towns of the Spanish Netherlands, with the addition of a few small towns within the French frontier. The garrisons which the States might think it expedient to keep there should be maintained at the cost of the country. The commerce between Holland and France should revert to the conditions, so favourable to the former country, which had been adjusted in 1667. In return, however, for these concessions his Majesty required the restitution of Aire, St. Venant, Bethune, and Douai. He demanded also that Lille and Tournay should be restored to him as his equivalent for demolishing the fortifications of Dunkirk.

As regarded the commerce with Spain and the West Indies Louis declared himself authorized to promise the English and Dutch nations that they should enjoy it upon the same conditions as had existed during the lifetime of the previous King.

Louis undertook that his grandson, the King of Spain, should renounce the kingdoms of Naples, and Sardinia, and the duchy of Milan, conditionally upon the House of Austria renouncing all pretensions to the other parts of the Spanish dominions.

* Boyer.

Upon the Rhine the boundaries of France and the Empire should be the same as before the outbreak of the war. His Majesty insisted, however, upon the restoration of the Electors of Bavaria and Cologne, and promised in return to acknowledge the King of Prussia.

Between France and Savoy there should be a mutual restoration of conquests. Portugal should be placed in the same condition as formerly. Lastly, Louis consented to join in any just measures for preventing the crowns of Spain and France from being ever united on the same head.

Such were the King's offers for a general peace, and it is not strange that they were received by almost every Power concerned with disappointment and indignation.* The change which had been effected in the tone of his Christian Majesty since the last conferences was indeed startling. Only eighteen months before he had been a suitor for mercy to the Allied Powers. He had been willing to grant almost any terms, to submit to almost any degradation, to obtain the priceless blessing of peace. He had forced his plenipotentiaries to curb their proud spirits, and endure in patience the affronts of a nation of traders rendered insolent by unlooked-for success in arms. He had professed his willingness that Spain should be yielded up to the House of Austria if only some expedient could be found to enforce the abdication of Philip short of his joining in a war against his own grandson. He had consented to large sacrifices of territory to the Emperor, and of some of the most important towns of his kingdom to the Dutch. He had even submitted to spoliation from the Duke of Savoy. And now, without having obtained a single advantage except on the side of Spain, with his frontier towns gone, with his resources apparently exhausted, the trade and manufactures of his kingdom utterly ruined, and his people starving, he was again the great, the irresistible Louis XIV. dictating his terms to Europe. The English Ministers might well be amazed at their own work; for to them alone could be ascribed the marvellous change

* Even the mild and generally impartial writer of the Lettres Historiques is moved to indignation. "Où est le bon citoyen, où est le fidèle allié qui ne s'écrie, après avoir lu ces propositions, Seigneur, préservez-nous d'une telle paix; et s'il le faut, donnez plutôt dix années de guerre semblables à celles que nous venons de passer."

which had been wrought in his Majesty's spirits. But it was impossible that the people of England could look on with indifference to so miserable a throwing away of their victories. The very insufficiency of the King's proposals roused in the plenipotentiaries of the Allied Powers a kind of satisfaction. The Dutch at once published them in their newspapers, and waited impatiently to see what effect they would produce. The feeling in Change Alley seems to have been that peace could not possibly be concluded unless his French Majesty was brought to a more reasonable frame of mind. Bank shares which had recovered to a hundred and fourteen pounds fell immediately to a hundred and ten. The House of Lords resounded with the clamours of the Whigs. Halifax inveighed against the proposals in no measured terms. Cowper remarked that it was no wonder that the King of France had reverted to his former arrogance now that the general who had kept him in awe had been dismissed. Sunderland affected to consider that his Majesty's offers could be intended only as a pasquinade. The Ministers bent to the storm; and an address was carried expressive of disapprobation of the terms in general, and particularly of that stipulation by which Louis proposed to withhold his acknowledgment of the Queen's title until the conclusion of peace.*

The French plenipotentiaries themselves were sensible that their offers were so far below expectation, that even the plenipotentiaries of England could not venture to mark their approval of them. But everything depended at this conjuncture upon their preserving a good understanding with the English Government. Polignac hastened to communicate with St. John, and a correspondence ensued which reveals the relations then subsisting between the Governments of England and France, and the relations between England and her Allies. Polignac complained that the Dutch and Imperialists were so inveterately set against peace, and that the English plenipotentiaries were so cold, that it was impossible to do any real business. There was but one way of compassing a treaty, and that was for the plenipotentiaries of England and France to come to a thorough understanding, so that they might act together.

* Parliamentary History; Burnet; Lettres Historiques; Boyer.

If that could be accomplished the High Allies might then intrigue, harangue, and lose their temper as much as they pleased. The English Ministers acquiesced in the wisdom of this suggestion; and Thomas Harley, Secretary of the Treasury and cousin of the Treasurer, was directed to prepare for a voyage to Holland with fresh instructions for the plenipotentiaries. The bold and determined spirit of St. John is deeply impressed in these and in all the other instructions issued for the guidance of the representatives of England, and never has the Government of this country assumed a more haughty attitude in dealing with the Powers of the Continent. Peace he was resolved that there should be. If the Dutch, Imperialists, and the rest continued to obstruct the conclusion of the treaty, England would separate herself from them, and make her own bargain with France. If, however, her Allies would be reasonable she would do her best to procure them a just satisfaction, though as to what constituted a just satisfaction she herself must be the sole arbitress. The French Ministers were also warned that there must be no trifling, that they must make proper concessions. The Parliament and the nation were now sincerely anxious for peace. But if they should be disappointed in their expectations as to the conduct of France, the tide would flow again for war as strongly as ever.*

The plenipotentiaries of the Allied Powers had been meanwhile engaged in drawing up separate sets of demands for presentation to the French. Before, however, they were quite finished, events occurred at the Court of France which excited the gravest apprehensions in those who were desirous of peace.

The Dauphin, the only legitimate child of Louis XIV. who survived infancy, died in February, 1711. His eldest son, the Duke of Burgundy, had then become heir-apparent to the throne, and had been invested with the title of Dauphin. His mildness and affability rendered him generally beloved, and many of the nobles anticipated with secret pleasure the time when the gentle Prince should succeed his cold, selfish, overbearing grandfather. Suddenly, at the close of February of

* The instructions to Mr. Harley are printed in Bolingbroke's Correspondence.

this year, he was seized with smallpox, or with a disease closely resembling it which was then raging in Paris, and snatched away in his thirtieth year. His charming duchess, who had been one of the solaces of the last melancholy years of Louis, had but six days before succumbed to the same malady. Two sons survived the unfortunate couple,—the Duke of Brittany, a child of five, and a puny, sickly infant entitled the Duke of Anjou. These two feeble lives alone intervened between the succession of Philip, King of Spain, to the crown of France; and within a week after the death of their last parent both the children were taken ill. The eldest soon died: the younger was given over for lost. For some days it seemed inevitable that the crowns of Spain and France would be united on the head of Philip, and that nothing but a renunciation by him of one of them, a sacrifice which he might not improbably refuse to make, would save Europe from an indefinite prolongation of the war. Contrary to expectation, however, the child struggled through its illness, and three years afterwards became Louis XV. "God," says Torcy, "preserved this lamp which was almost extinguished, to continue in the direct line that succession which a few years before had been looked upon as firmly established."

But with only Louis XIV., now in his seventy-fourth year, and this delicate infant intervening between Philip and the crown of France, the apprehensions entertained by the various Powers of Europe of an union of the French and Spanish crowns could not be treated as chimerical. It was now evident that, unless some expedient could be devised to restrain the too probable ambition of Philip, all the discussions which were proceeding at Utrecht upon other matters were but a waste of time. St. John set himself with his usual energy to remedy this state of things. At the same time that Thomas Harley was despatched to the plenipotentiaries, Gaultier was sent off with a memorial to Versailles. The Queen proposed that Philip should at once make his choice between the two crowns. If he chose to retain the crown of Spain he should immediately renounce for himself and his children all right of succeeding to that of France: if he elected to take his chance of succeeding to the crown of France, then he should

immediately and for ever renounce the crown of Spain. In this expedient there was indeed one conspicuous flaw. It was impossible for Philip, even if he could make a renunciation that would be regarded as binding upon himself by the laws and churches of both kingdoms, to deprive his children of what was theirs by right of birth. But to the eyes of French lawyers a still greater difficulty presented itself. The right of succeeding to their crown, they declared, was of Divine origin and indefeasible. No renunciation therefore which a French prince could make would be of the least validity. In spite of any oath to the contrary, he might ascend the throne, and the allegiance of his subjects would still be due to the perjurer.

The French ministers declared, however, that their own desire to prevent an union of the two crowns was as strong as that of any of the Allied Powers. Torcy even asserted that the people of France and Spain had more reason to dread such an occurrence than all the other nations of Europe. It was plain that if the crowns were united on one head, one of the kingdoms must sink into a province of the other; and it was not likely that France would consent to become a province of Spain, or Spain be contented with being a province of France. The probable result, therefore, of Philip becoming possessed of both crowns would be a rebellion and a civil war. The position affords no bad illustration of the folly of statesmanship when directed simply to the aggrandizement of a particular family without reference to the welfare of mankind. To bring this very event to pass had been, sixty years back, the object of Mazarin's most ambitious schemes for enhancing the grandeur of the House of Bourbon; and now, when it seemed likely that a Bourbon would soon be reigning from Antwerp to Cadiz, French diplomatists were compelled to tax their invention for the means of averting such a calamity.

In spite of the opinions expressed by French lawyers as to the inefficacy of any possible form of renunciation, St. John persisted tenaciously that the renunciation should at least be made. In the forthcoming treaty of peace the succession to the crowns of France and Spain might be declared, and all the Powers who signed that treaty might be made guarantors for carrying its provisions into effect. It was then unlikely that

Philip would presume, with the certainty of drawing upon himself a war from all sides, to violate his oath and ascend the throne he had renounced. After some correspondence between Torcy and St. John, Louis agreed to submit two propositions to his grandson. He might retain Spain and the Indies, provided he would renounce for himself and his descendants all right to the crown of France. But if he preferred to preserve his right to the French crown, then he must immediately yield up the Spanish monarchy to the Duke of Savoy, and content himself with the dominions which the Duke would vacate. It was the earnest hope, and indeed the expectation of Louis, that Philip would embrace the second alternative. His grandson's chances of reigning in France were then certainly very great. The old monarch felt that his days were few, that if the infant who had now become heir-apparent should survive him, that France would be left to the evils of a long minority, and from feelings which, it is to be hoped, were not devoid of genuine sympathy for the people he had so long governed, he was anxious that at all events the regency might fall into hands with some experience of the art of ruling. Philip, however, as soon as he was convinced that his choice must be made, unhesitatingly accepted the first proposition. He had grown attached to his Spanish subjects: their fidelity had touched his heart; and he perhaps reflected that the crown of Spain in possession was better worth preserving than a contingent remainder to the crown of France. His decision proved a fortunate one for himself, if to be a king may be considered as a fortunate lot in life.*

Little had been done at Utrecht while the negotiations upon this important subject were proceeding between the English and French Governments. Each plenipotentiary of the Allied Powers, including the most petty princes of Germany, had handed in his demands upon France, and the French representatives had of course pronounced them exorbitant and unreasonable. Against one article found in the demands of England, Holland, and Prussia, and upon which great stress was laid, the French, especially Polignac, expressed strong resentment. It seems to have occurred to those Powers that now, when they

* Mémoires de Torcy; St. Simon; Correspondence of Bolingbroke.

were all together, and in a position to dictate terms to France, was the time to wring from his Majesty some stipulations in favour of his Protestant subjects. Louis was therefore required to open his prisons and to unchain from his galleys the unfortunate persons who were punished merely for their religion, to restore the property of those who had been driven out of the kingdom by his tyranny, and to accord in future to the people of his dominions the liberty of worshipping God after their own fashion. Polignac was in great indignation at this attempt to interfere with the domestic policy of his master. "How would you take it," he said to Vanderdussen, "if the King of France were to ask you to set free all the people confined in your gaols?" "If," very aptly replied the Dutchman, "his Majesty would own for his brethren the malefactors in our gaols as we own for brethren the persons he detains in his galleys, I doubt not but his request would be granted."*

Meanwhile, the armies had appeared in the field, and considerable activity had been displayed by detached parties in burning magazines and flooding the country by breaking down the dykes. This was, however, before the arrival on the scene of the commanders-in-chief. At the end of March, Eugene returned from London, and was at once appointed by the States-general to the command of their troops in the place of Marlborough, with a promise that the field deputies should interfere with him as little as possible. Ormond did not make his appearance until nearly a month later, and then met with a very cold reception from Heinsius. The Pensionary politely evaded any discussion with him about military operations. In truth, the Dutch statesmen were all firmly convinced that England was betraying the Alliance, that her Ministers had come to an understanding with France; and they suspected that the mission of Ormond was rather to check the activity of their forces than to co-operate with them. The suspicion was well grounded. The Duke, within a fortnight after landing on the Continent, was warned by St. John to be exceedingly cautious of engaging in any action unless the advantage was plain and considerable, and to keep all the troops in her Majesty's pay strictly under his own control. As the negotia-

* Boyer.

tions with Torcy proceeded, and the Secretary's hopes rose of bringing to a satisfactory settlement the principal subject in dispute between France and England, still more stringent instructions were issued to the Commander-in-Chief. During the last week of May, he received that order which afterwards furnished to a Whig Government and Parliament the principal ground for impeaching St. John. The Queen's positive command was laid upon Ormond, a command which he was, however, to keep secret, not to join in any siege nor to hazard her Majesty's troops in any battle without further orders. The Queen, it was explained to him, could not think with patience of sacrificing men's lives when there was a fair prospect of attaining her purpose by another method.*

Only a few days before Ormond received this order, Eugene and he had reviewed the Allied forces in the neighbourhood of Douai. So fine an army had perhaps never been seen even in the Netherlands. The combined strength of the troops was upwards of a hundred and twenty thousand men, mostly experienced soldiers, and all replete with that confidence and enthusiasm which a long course of good fortune always inspires. Not many miles distant were the head-quarters of the French. Villars was again the champion to whom Louis entrusted the protection of his kingdom. In parting with his favourite general, the aged King, still reeling under the burden of his domestic misfortunes, revealed the deep dejection, almost amounting to despair, which had possession of his mind. He now saw that nothing but the friendly efforts of the Queen and her Ministers could save him from humiliation and his kingdom from ruin. He was persuaded of their sincerity towards him, but he doubted their power to compel the rest of the Allies to accept reasonable terms of peace. He had been advised, he said, not to await any further defeat of his armies and the advance of a victorious enemy upon his capital, but to consult his safety at once by retiring to Blois. But he had rejected this counsel. He thought it was impossible that armies so considerable as his could be scattered to the winds by a single defeat. The Marshal, in the event of misfortune, would collect the remains of his forces and post himself behind the Somme.

* St. John to Ormond, April 25, May 6; May 10—21.

Meanwhile he himself would summon to his standard a fresh army, march to Peronne or St. Quentin, and in one last desperate encounter save the State, or perish in defending it.*

The reflections even of the confident and dashing Villars were scarcely less despondent than those of his master when he returned to the Netherlands. He found his troops, as usual, in a half-naked condition, as hungry as wolves, scattered about the country to seek a living, and converting every town which was cursed with their presence into a pandemonium. It was with great difficulty that he could procure horses to draw the little artillery he possessed. And while racking his invention for expedients to keep his forces alive, he had the mortification of hearing that the magazines of the Allies were crammed with provisions, and that fresh convoys arrived almost daily at their camp. The large garrisons he was compelled to throw into the neighbouring towns reduced his force in the field to a total far below that at the disposal of the Allied commanders. Whatever opinion may be entertained as to the wisdom of the English Ministers in determining to make peace at this conjuncture, it can scarcely be doubted that their interference came just in time to save France from calamities almost as great as those she endured after the battle of Agincourt.

But in the midst of his perplexities Villars was cheered by a notice from his court that he need no longer regard the English commander as an enemy. He lost no time in opening a correspondence with the Duke on the pretext of negotiating the exchange of a French prisoner of rank, and inquired very earnestly whether his orders applied to the troops in English pay, who numbered some thirty thousand men, or only to the native English, who were not more than twelve thousand. Ormond could or would return no positive answer on this point.† As a gentleman and a soldier he felt keenly the equivocal position in which he was placed. He had, in pursuance of instructions furnished to him in London, told both the Dutch authorities and his colleague, the Prince, that her Majesty intended to push the war with vigour, and had been

* Mémoires de Villars.

† Campagne de Flandre; Mémoires de Villars; Ormond to Villars, May 26; June 11, June 12.

deeply mortified by the coldness with which his assurances were received, and by the doubts of his sincerity which he perceived expressed in every face. The orders he had since received filled up the measure of his degradation in his own eyes. It was plainly impossible for him to keep them secret. In a few days the whole army would be crying out that the traitor was unmasked, that he was only a mock general, a mere tool of the peace-makers. He saw that, when it came to a separation of forces, no troops beyond his own English could be depended upon to follow him.

His embarrassment, however, was of no long duration. Eugene, who, from the negligence shown by Villars in guarding his camp, suspected how matters stood, pressed him, in concert with the Dutch deputies and a host of officers who had reconnoitred the position of the French army, to join in an attack which could hardly fail of being attended with success. After many evasions the unhappy general was compelled to avow that, until the receipt of further orders from England, he could unite in no military operation.*

This avowal quickly reached the Hague, and created no little stir among the Dutch statesmen. A day or two afterwards came news from Utrecht of still more ominous import. The Bishop of Bristol, it seems, had been questioned by the Dutch plenipotentiaries whether he knew anything about the Duke's orders, and had replied with as much warmth as a bishop could decently display, that, although he knew nothing for certain upon the subject, he should not think it wonderful if his Grace were restrained from co-operating any longer with his colleague. "If," he explained, "her Majesty finds you evading all the proposals she makes with a view to effecting a peace, and perpetually declining to enter into any scheme with her, is it not reasonable that she should act for herself, and hold her conscience discharged of all obligations to you?" These words excited great alarm at the Hague. The only interpretation that the Dutch could imagine was that the Queen of England was on

* Boyer; Lettres Historiques. This is how St. John strove to console the unfortunate Duke for the very ignominious part he was made to perform. "True glory results from obeying the Prince one serves punctually, and promoting the interest of one's country steadily, in preference to all other considerations of private honour or advantage."

the point of concluding a separate peace with France, and would retire from the war. The States-general held several anxious deliberations. A long memorial was at length drawn up and despatched to the Queen. Her Majesty was entreated to revoke the restraining orders which she had issued to the Duke, and furthermore that she would condescend to explain the meaning of the Bishop's remarks. An answer was speedily returned, but it was evasive and unsatisfactory. Her Majesty declared that she desired nothing more cordially than to preserve a good understanding with the United Provinces, and that it would not be her fault if all her measures for peace or war were not taken in concert with the States-general. One circumstance, however, connected with this memorial had given great offence to the Queen and her Ministers. It was hardly in the royal hands before it was in print and selling about the streets. Such an outrageous affront to his royal mistress might well have provoked a milder and less zealous servant than St. John. His answer to the States-general concluded, therefore, with a sharp reproof for a proceeding so contrary to the practice of statesmen, and even of gentlemen, and which rendered their memorial not so much an address to the Sovereign as an appeal to the people.*

* The memorial and answer are both printed in the Appendix to Boyer.

CHAPTER XII.

In the House of Lords the intelligence of Ormond's refusal to attack the French had meanwhile given rise to a stormy debate. The spirits of the Whigs rose. No true Englishman, they imagined, whatever might be his politics, could endure the spectacle of a brave army held in leading-strings by statesmen at home, or support with indifference the contempt which was darted at his country by the military nations of the Continent. The party collected all its strength for an attack upon the Ministers, and was sanguine that before the close of the debate my Lord Oxford would be on his road to the Tower.* Upon the 28th of May, Halifax moved an address to the Queen that the instructions given to the Duke of Ormond might be laid before the House, and that further orders might be issued to him to act offensively in concert with the Allies. The Treasurer, after being much pressed by several peers to explain how matters really stood, at length broke silence. The orders given to the Duke, he said, he could not, without the express command of her Majesty, reveal. He would, however, declare that orders had been recently sent him which permitted his joining in a siege. In a few days her Majesty would lay before the House the conditions upon which a general peace might be made. The notion of effecting a separate peace, he continued, had never been for an instant entertained by the Government. Such a project would be foolish, villainous, knavish. And was it not against common prudence to risk a battle when the terms of peace were so nearly arranged, and the adversary one who had so little scruple in breaking from

* Boyer. The writer adds, "But that dexterous statesman so bestirred himself on that critical juncture and made so many nocturnal visits that he effectually defeated the designs of his less vigilant and less active enemies."

his word? Wharton, always prepared to take advantage of any unguarded statement from an opponent, was on his legs in a moment. "I am very glad," he said, "to find that noble lord now convinced of the bad faith of the enemy. But let me tell him that the best method of dealing with unscrupulous persons is to reduce them to the necessity of keeping their engagements." The renegade Nottingham stood faithfully by his newly-espoused party. Devonshire, a proud and high-spirited peer, remarked that, being closely related to the Duke of Ormond, he could not forbear expressing his surprise that any one should dare to make use of a nobleman of the highest rank and character as an instrument. But the adherents of the Ministers remained firm, and the Whigs perceiving at length that their oratory was lost on the compact mass, and that their defeat was inevitable, would have dropped their motion. But this the Tories would not permit. Halifax's motion was pressed to a division, and was negatived by sixty-eight votes against forty. All that remained for the defeated peers was to record their protest, and, according to the usual tactics of the party, to make it an appeal to the country by printing and circulating it. Upon the same day a similar motion made in the Commons was defeated by the overwhelming majority of two hundred and three against seventy-three voices. St. John was in a glow of exultation at the convincing proof this result afforded as to the temper of the Parliament. "I think," he wrote that evening to the Bishop of Bristol, "the spirit shown on this occasion must convince every one at home and abroad that it is vain to attempt forcing the Queen from the resolutions she has formed and the measures in which she is engaged."*

An episode occurred during this debate which shows how fierce were the animosities that consumed the breasts of rival politicians. Marlborough had spoken energetically, but with his usual dignity, in favour of the motion, and had dwelt especially upon the importance of acquiring Cambrai and Arras to facilitate the entrance of the Allied armies into the heart of France. Perceiving his bitter enemy, Argyle, upon the opposite benches, and perhaps being anxious to effect a reconciliation with that influential and popular nobleman, he

* Parliamentary History; St. John to Lord Privy Seal, May 28, June 8.

appealed to him, with a compliment to his skill in military affairs and his knowledge of the country, to bear witness to the truth of what he said. But no flattery, even when administered by the most adroit and fascinating of flatterers, could assuage the hatred with which this northern lord regarded his old commander. Arras and Cambrai, he remarked, in the course of a long speech, might easily have been obtained in 1710 had not the noble Duke preferred to waste time and an infinity of blood upon the capture of such unimportant places as Aire, Bethune, and St. Venant. This criticism upon Marlborough's conduct, so far as we are in a position to judge, was wholly unwarrantable. The declining popularity in which the hero found himself in 1710, the weariness of war which he perceived to be gaining ground in England, leave little room for doubting but that if an opportunity of doing something brilliant had presented itself, he would eagerly have availed himself of it. The view he took of his situation, his estimate of the skill and vigilance of Villars probably differed widely from the opinions of an amateur soldier glowing with courage and animal spirits, and without the sense of responsibility which attaches to the position of commander-in-chief. But the speech of Argyle, although intemperate, was that of a gentleman when compared with one soon afterwards made by Earl Powlett. "The Duke of Ormond," he exclaimed, "is not like a certain general who is accustomed to lead his troops to slaughter in order that a number of his officers may be knocked on the head, and he may fill his pockets by disposing of their commissions." Powlett seems to have blurted out this piece of scandal gathered in Tory coffee-houses or from anonymous broadsides, without having received the smallest provocation, and with no other motive than a low-minded disposition to insult a fallen and unpopular man. Until the House rose Marlborough took no notice of the affront. As the members, however, were separating, the Earl was accosted by Mohun with an invitation from the Duke "to take the air in the country." The courage of the bully evaporated. He could not conceal his emotion from his wife, who speedily discovered the cause. Lady Powlett promptly sent round word to the Secretary of State that her lord had been provoked to a duel by the Duke of Marlborough.

The matter was reported to Anne, who thought proper to interfere by laying her commands upon his Grace to proceed no further in the affair.*

Nine days after this debate, Anne went down to the House of Peers to redeem the promise of her Ministers that the proposals of the French Government should be laid before Parliament. The speech she now delivered derives importance from its giving the first clear intimation to the world of her approval of Philip's retaining possession of Spain upon his solemnly renouncing all claim to the throne of France. The agreement with Louis was recommended to the favour of the English by some cessions of territory in North America, of Gibraltar, and Minorca to secure their commerce in the Mediterranean, and of the assiento contract, with its valuable monopoly of supplying the West Indies with negroes. The Commons received the royal speech with every mark of satisfaction. A few, but a very few, members supported a proposition that the subjects mentioned by her Majesty should be taken successively into consideration. Their voices were drowned in the cries of the majority. An address was carried expressive of the entire confidence of the House in the Queen's steady pursuit of the true interest of her kingdoms, and in her endeavours to procure what was right for her allies.

But in the Peers' there was greater opposition to the terms of peace; for men like Marlborough, Wharton, Halifax, and Cowper were men not easily to be conquered. A glance, however, at the numbers in the divisions reveals the circumstance that many members of the House, although still adhering perhaps to the Whig party on other points, had modified their opinions as to the advisability of continuing the war. Marlborough again spoke, and asserted that the measures which had been pursued in England during the past year were contrary to her Majesty's engagements with her Allies; that they sullied the triumphs and glories of her reign, and would render the English name odious to other nations. This speech naturally excited no small indignation among the Tories. Strafford, who had come over for a short time from Utrecht, and had just taken his seat among the Peers, inaugurated his accession to

* Boyer; Lettres Historiques; Oldmixon; Lockhart's Memoirs.

the House by a fling at the hero. "Some of the Allies," he observed, "would not have shown so much unwillingness to a peace had not a member of that assembly maintained a secret correspondence with them." The Earl, a bad and intemperate speaker, had soon cause to repent an indiscretion which brought down upon him the most polished orator of the House. "The noble lord," remarked Cowper, "has been abroad so long that he appears to have forgotten not only the language but even the constitution of his native country. I never yet heard it suggested that to hold a correspondence with our allies, allies too whose interests has so frequently been declared to be inseparable from our own, was a proper subject of complaint against any person. On the other hand, it would be difficult to reconcile with any laws the conduct of those who treat clandestinely with our enemies." The Whigs proposed to add a clause to the address of thanks recommending her Majesty to act in concert with the Allies that there might be a mutual guarantee of the treaty of peace. They were beaten by eighty-one members against thirty-six.*

This was the last attempt of the Whigs to frustrate a peace upon which the Sovereign was determined, which met with the approval of an overwhelming majority of the Parliament, and which many signs indicated to be agreeable to the nation. Public opinion soon declared itself in the customary manner. A week after this outline of the terms had been submitted to the Houses, a deputation extraordinarily numerous, and composed of the wealthiest merchants in London, waited upon the Queen to express the gratitude of the Corporation for the care which had been taken of British commerce. The example set by the metropolis was followed by the corporations of most of the cities of England and Scotland.† It would have been strange indeed if, now that a fair prospect was opened of separating the monarchies of Spain and France, now that Louis was no longer a prince to be dreaded, and that the passion for

* Parliamentary History; Burnet; Lettres Historiques; Boyer. Oxford was perhaps roughly handled during the debate, although no record of it remains. St. John, writing the same evening (June 7—18) to Thomas Harley, says, "The House of Lords is this moment in debate on the Queen's speech, and his Lordship, while I am writing to you, may very probably be employed in wiping off some of the dirt which that scavenger Wharton throws at him."

† Boyer; Lettres Historiques.

military glory had spent itself, the people of Great Britain should have preferred to continue an expensive war merely for the sake of benefiting their commercial rivals, the Dutch, and of aggrandizing the House of Austria, whose interests were nothing to them.

Two or three acts passed during this session deserve commemoration. In the first place, the Naturalization Act, the working of which had disappointed and confounded its Whig authors, and which had excited an enormous amount of discontent among the poor of London, was repealed with very general approval.

Another piece of legislation deserves to be reckoned among the most baneful errors into which the governing body of this country ever fell. It is a happy circumstance for that gentleman who first conceived the design of imposing a tax upon books and newspapers that his name has not been preserved, since it would be difficult for Charity herself to speak of him with kindness. To his mischievous ingenuity may be ascribed the repression of knowledge during a century and a half, and that all the fruits of the labours of many good and wise authors passed into the pockets of the Government, although the profits of other authors, who deserved whipping, were not materially impaired.

Anne, in her message of the 17th of January, referred, among other subjects, to the number of false and scandalous libels which issued almost daily from the press. Such libels, she observed, were a reproach to any Government. The evil had become too strong for the laws, and she recommended the Parliament to devise a remedy equal to the mischief. The anxiety felt by the Ministers about the machinations of the Whigs and the Dutch, of Marlborough, Bothmar, and Eugene, to overturn the Government and frustrate the peace doubtless was the origin of this complaint and recommendation. The doleful cry that England was betraying her allies, that she was about to conclude a surreptitious and separate peace with France, that she was held in scorn by her old associates, the Dutch and Imperialists, was everlastingly exhibiting itself in some fresh shape in the booksellers' windows. Letters and memorials from foreign Powers to the Sovereign were no

sooner presented, protests of Whig peers were scarcely dry upon the journals of the House, than they were being sold about the streets by hawkers, and figuring in half the newspapers of the kingdom. The circumstance most provoking to the Ministers was the difficulty of catching the authors of those strictures upon their policy which they were pleased to term libels. It was very rare that a person who wrote upon political subjects appended his name to the work. It was, in truth, an essential qualification of the professional author of that age that he should be always as ready to take to his heels and possess as consummate an acquainfance with hiding-places as a pickpocket. The printer it was indeed easy to light on. But the comparative or entire innocence of a mere mechanic was so obvious that no minister could, without rendering himself obnoxious to a charge of tyrannizing, visit the crime severely upon him. St. John, in his correspondence, continually dwelt upon the malignancy of Whig pamphleteers without condescending to remember that the writers on his own side were just as virulent and abusive as their opponents. In fact, a libel in the eyes of St. John was synonymous with an unfavourable criticism upon a Minister or his measures. No man had a right to utter a word against the Government unless he were a Member of Parliament and spoke from his seat in the House. If an author chose to meddle with political subjects, he was bound to write in favour of the existing Ministers.

The intimation of the royal wishes was received with much favour by the Commons, who in their answer expressed their desire to suppress the publication not only of libels reflecting upon the Government, but also of the horrid blasphemies against God and religion which were constantly vented by writers. But inasmuch as no remedy was suggested, the House was in great perplexity to find one, and the consideration of this part of the message was put off from time to time. In April, however, occurred an incident which roused the Commons to activity. In the *Daily Courant* appeared the memorial presented by the States-general to her Majesty, a document which the Ministers and their supporters very justly considered a highly dangerous one for the perusal of the public.

The printer, Samuel Buckley, was at once ordered into the custody of the Sergeant-at-arms; and a few days after the Commons, in grand committee, resolved that the publication of scandalous and impious libels was prejudicial to the Government, was occasioned by the absence of proper regulations of the press, that in future all printing-presses should be registered in the names of the owners, and that the author of every book should append his name and place of abode. Shortly after the passing of these resolutions a member in the Committee of Ways and Means made a proposal that at once captivated the House. It was simply to subject literature on all subjects to a tax. A good deal of discussion apparently followed. The probability was obvious that, if the profits of authorship were diminished, much unnecessary and injurious scribbling would cease. Yet no man capable of reflection could avoid forecasting that under such a general discouragement society would debar itself of the thoughts of many learned and ingenious persons. That a physician, for instance, who had made valuable discoveries in medicine, a philosopher who had investigated the laws of nature, a mechanic who saw a way to economize the labour of millions, should be subjected to a tax for imparting benefits to mankind, must have appeared a monstrous thing to any but the most stupid and ignorant of men. And even this was not the extent of the misfortunes which such legislation might inflict. No fact was at that time better established than that the authors of the best books had not as a rule been gainers in a commercial sense, whereas pernicious books were often a fortune to their writers. The plays of Aphra Behn and the licentious tales of Mrs. Manley found a hundred times more purchasers in their generation than the "Principia" and the "Paradise Lost," and would have found them even if those productions had been a little dearer. It should have been seen, therefore, that the consequence of subjecting literature to an indiscriminate tax was to add to the already superabundant causes which discourage men of genius and learning, without affording any adequate check to demoralizing writers. It speaks little for the discrimination of this Tory House of Commons that the only exception to an universal tax upon literature which it could be brought to favour

was of school-books and books of piety. All other printed matter was subjected to a stamp duty of a penny a sheet.*

A lively sentence of Swift has often been quoted as a graphic description of the consternation which this new tax produced among authors and booksellers.† Even at this early stage in the history of periodical literature it was computed that ten thousand persons in the United Kingdom derived their living either wholly or in part from their pens;‡ and this number, incredible as it then appeared to foreigners, was perhaps no great exaggeration, since the facts remain that London alone supported twenty-one newspapers, and that most of the large provincial towns had also periodicals of their own. The weaker journals at once gave up the ghost. Several others thought it prudent to amalgamate. After a little experience of the new system, Addison, the most charming of essayists, was compelled to bring to a close his instructive and amusing *Spectator;* and Defoe, who had been for eight years the unwearying advocate of liberty, free-trade, and religious toleration, laid down his *Review.*

It would have been strange if a House of Commons which had won the suffrages of the people by the zeal which they felt or affected for the Church of England, should have been content to pass away without leaving behind them some memorial of their bigotry. The foolish inclination of this Parliament to force the Episcopalian system down the throats of the Scottish nation went very near to excite a rebellion. If any institution of Scotland seemed more secure than another by the Act of Union, it was certainly the Presbyterian form of worship. The maintenance of that form had been declared an essential and fundamental condition of the Union. It may, however, be open to doubt whether the religious authorities of North Britain did not, when their country became annexed to a country holding more civilized and enlightened doctrines than their own about toleration, abandon their power of persecuting other sects. But in any case a power so dear to the priestly mind the Kirk

* 10 Anne, c. 18; Lettres Historiques; Boyer.

† "The Observator is fallen; the Medleys are jumbled together with the *Flying Post;* the *Examiner* is deadly sick; the *Spectator* keeps up and doubles its price. I know not how long it will last."—Journal to Stella.

‡ Lettres Historiques.

was determined to exercise, and while so many causes of irritation existed between the two countries, the English Parliament might wisely have imitated the indifference of Gallio, and left Episcopalians and Presbyterians to fight out their quarrels by themselves. The Houses, however, chose to interfere in favour of the former sect. In 1711 the Lords condemned in a large penalty certain magistrates who, at the instance of the clergy of Edinburgh, had imprisoned an Episcopalian clergyman named Greenshields for persisting in the public performance of his obnoxious ritual. This proceeding naturally created considerable alarm among the Presbyterian population. For that toleration should henceforward be the law of the land, that all people should be free to worship God after their own fashion, was a state of things wholly inconceivable by the Scottish intellect. One sect, it was thought, must be uppermost, and to enable it to maintain its ascendancy, must be endowed with the power of persecuting its competitors. Was it possible that her Majesty, and those ungodly men who were her advisers, could, in defiance of the provisions of the Union, entertain the horrid design of subverting the Presbyterian system and of setting over it those enemies of true religion, the Episcopalians? The General Assembly hastened to send up to London three ministers to represent matters in a proper light. These devout personages upon their arrival found the Commons engaged upon several bills of sinister import. By one of these bills it was proposed to repeal all persecuting acts in the Scottish law, and to permit Episcopalian clergymen to solemnize their ritual with as much freedom as was allowed to the Dissenters of England. The only conditions attached to this boon were that they should take the oath of allegiance to her Majesty and abjure the Pretender in the usual form. But the same oaths were also enjoined upon the Presbyterian ministers, and the clergy of both systems were commanded to introduce prayers for the Princess Sophia and the family of Hanover into their public worship. The object of another bill was to restore to patrons of churches those rights of presentation of which they had been deprived by an Act of the Scottish Parliament passed in 1690, at a time when the Presbyterian influence was overwhelming. And as if the English Houses deemed these bills

not sufficiently significant of their plans about religion, they had a third piece of legislation under consideration which seemed specially designed as an insult to Presbyterian feeling. The dislike of pious persons in Scotland to the observance of those seasons which the Christian Church has from the earliest times set apart as specially sacred, had been strongly manifested ever since the Reformation. For an individual to rejoice on Christmas Day, or to mourn and fast on Good Friday, was regarded by the saints as a sure sign that his soul had not yet shaken off the sin of Popery. One of the first uses to which the ascendant Kirk had put its power after the Revolution was to obtain an act to prolong the session of the courts of justice through the Christmas vacation. This act the Parliament now proposed to repeal.

All of these bills became law in spite of a representation presented to the Lords by the three Scottish ministers. While the first mentioned of them was passing through the Lower House some Whig enlivened the debates by a wicked parody upon the occasional conformity bill. He moved the insertion of a clause in the Scottish act to compel persons holding any appointment dependent on the crown of Scotland to take the Sacrament in the form prescribed by the Presbyterian Church, and to prohibit them under penalties from attending Episcopalian places of dissent. The audacious humourist actually pressed his motion to a division.

The excitement occasioned by this legislation was at its height in Scotland, and in many places the Scottish clergy were stirring up their congregations by appointing fast-days to implore God's protection for his endangered Church, when the General Assembly met. The deliberations were, however, conducted in a tone more moderate than could have been expected. In reply to a royal letter, which the Duke of Athol read as Commissioner, the clergy were content to express their feelings in a pious hope that they might still be enabled to continue as loyal as formerly. One grievance, nevertheless, proved hard of digestion. A tenderness for the exiled dynasty pervaded the whole population of Scotland, lay and clerical, and the oath abjuring the Pretender was drawn in a form so stringent that one may well wonder at this day how any clergyman,

either in Scotland or England, could reconcile matters with his conscience to take it. A staunch Protestant might easily bring himself to believe that James II. abandoned all claims to the allegiance of his subjects by becoming a Papist, and that his son had no claim to that allegiance so long as he remained a Papist. But should James III. return to the Protestant religion his right to the throne appeared perfect. The Parliament indeed had altered the succession; but that Parliaments had authority to defeat the divine right of kings the great mass of the clergy of Great Britain, and especially the rigid formal Presbyterians, no more believed than that Parliaments could, by passing an act, stop the flow of the tides. And supposing that the oath of abjuration were taken, what would follow if James regained the crown? Would not a new oath be tendered to the swearer, would he not be called upon to declare allegiance to the sovereign he had abjured and to abjure the sovereign to whom he had sworn allegiance? If he accepted such an oath he must perjure himself: if he refused to take it he would be accounted a rebel. These considerations moved the General assembly to send up an address to Anne imploring her to excuse the Presbyterian clergy from taking the oath of abjuration, which, they stated, was inconsistent with the establishment of their Church. The Queen returned a refusal to this supplication; and the oath, although the Government generally acted with great forbearance and leniency, continued for the best part of a century to inspire tender consciences with qualms.*

On the 21st of June, Anne adjourned the Parliament for a fortnight. Why an adjournment and not a prorogation, as usual at this season was directed, occasioned much speculation. The Whigs were not slow in imputing the cause to a spiteful wish on the part of the Ministers to keep their friend Walpole in prison a little longer. On the 8th of July, however, the prorogation was proclaimed in the customary form, and Walpole regained his liberty.

In the same month St. John was raised to the peerage with the titles of Baron St. John and Viscount Bolingbroke. He had confidently expected to be made an Earl, and his disappointment may have arisen from Oxford desiring to preserve a

* Boyer; Lettres Historiques; Wright's History of Scotland.

distinction between the leader and the secretary. It is certain, however, that St. John, notwithstanding his abilities and the services he had rendered to the Government, was not a favourite with Anne. No amount of wit and talent could redeem a profligate man in the eyes of the pious and moral Queen; and reports of St. John's drunken frolics, his low amours, and of the manner in which religious subjects were discussed by him and his boon companions, had been the talk of the town ever since the brilliant youth left college. He chose, nevertheless, to attribute his disappointment entirely to the jealousy and treachery of Oxford. For that solemn decorous trifler he had for some time entertained a contempt which he was at little pains to disguise. A sense of injury now turned that feeling to hatred. From henceforth the feud between the two Ministers was open, and defied all the efforts of mutual friends to heal.*

Meanwhile the correspondence between the English and French Governments had been unremitting, for the position in which Ormond was placed created much anxiety. Eugene had commenced the siege of Quesnoy. It was too much to expect that Villars would remain idle under these circumstances; and if he attacked the Prince, Ormond would be compelled by every principle of honour to go to the assistance of his colleague. A great battle might then ensue; and whatever its result might be one thing was certain, that the various passions it would arouse would scatter to the winds all the arrangements for peace which had been so carefully elaborated. It was moreover highly desirable that Ormond should be relieved from the uncomfortable and embarrassing position in which he was placed. The feelings of Marlborough's unhappy successor during this period of uncertainty must have been such as to make him envy the humblest private in his ranks. He was at the head of a splendid army, and the chivalrous blood in his veins prompted him to add new distinction to an illustrious name. He was in presence of all the great captains of the age, whose good report he would have given worlds to obtain. Yet when they urged him to action he could return nothing

* Swift's Inquiry into the Behaviour of the Queen's last Ministry; St. John to Strafford, July 23, August 3.

but flimsy excuses such as a gentleman abhors to employ. But at length a period came to his ordeal. On the 25th of June he announced in a general council of the Allied officers that he had received the Queen's orders to publish a suspension of arms with the French for two months. He proposed to Eugene to publish a similar order to the troops under his command. The Prince replied coldly that he could not do so without communicating with the Hague and Vienna.*

A bargain had, in fact, been concluded between the Governments of England and France. The impatience of Bolingbroke at the perversity of the Dutch and Imperialists knew no bounds. He was determined that his country should not, through the folly of her Allies, lose the advantages of those terms which she had arranged for herself. Foremost among those advantages he rated the stipulation to which Louis had consented that the harbour and fortifications of Dunkirk should be destroyed. He had, therefore, proposed as the condition of a suspension of arms between her Majesty and the King of France that the town should be delivered up to the English troops until the equivalent which the King was to receive for his concession was finally settled. To this proposition Louis had agreed, and Bolingbroke on his part despatched the necessary orders to Ormond. The Duke was instructed to separate himself with all the forces in British pay from the camp of the Allies, and to take possession of Dunkirk. Ormond was already convinced of his incapability to execute such orders; for he was aware that the Dutch deputies had given private assurances to the commanders of the mercenary troops that, if England refused to pay them any longer, they might look to the States-general. He, however, called together the officers, informed them of her Majesty's pleasure that they should be in readiness to march to Dunkirk in three days, and received the expected reply. They had come to Flanders, they said, to act against the enemy; and orders of another kind they would not obey before receiving some clear intimation of the will of their own sovereigns. "Then," retorted Ormond, "you need look neither for bread, nor pay, nor even to get your arrears from England." To the Duke of Wirtemberg, who commanded the important

* Lettres Historiques; Boyer; Burnet.

body of Danes, Ormond held out a threat that, if the King of Denmark presumed to thwart the Queen's determination to arrange a peace, her Majesty's fleet should throw obstacles in the way of the King's designs in the north. "No considerations of that sort," Wirtemberg stiffly replied, "will deter me from discharging what I take to be my duty."

Three days passed over, and Ormond again sent round to the commanders of the mercenary troops his orders for marching. Their reply was to the same effect as before. "Tell his Grace," said the high-spirited Prince of Hesse-Cassel to the officer who brought the message, "that I desire nothing better than to march, provided it be against the enemy." The Duke was in great perplexity. He had as yet received no intimation from the French Government that an order to admit the British troops into Dunkirk had been issued. He was even informed by Villars that his Majesty had thought it right to suspend the issue of such an order. The consent of Louis to the sacrifice had been based on the understanding that the suspension of arms should be general, or that it should at least include all the troops in British pay, which would be nearly half the Allied army. It now seemed that the suspension would affect only a few battalions of native English, whose withdrawal from an army of a hundred and twenty thousand men would be of little consequence. Nothing, therefore, remained for Ormond except to await the result of further negotiations. In the meantime Quesnoy, hardly pressed by Eugene, surrendered at discretion. This triumph, coupled with the conduct of the commanding-officers of the troops in British pay, so raised the spirits of the Dutch and Imperialists that for a few days it was imagined that, notwithstanding the defection of England, the war might be continued with success.*

Both Governments were, however, sincerely desirous of effecting an arrangement, and the vigorous mind of Bolingbroke speedily surmounted all difficulties. Since a party among the Allies, he wrote to Torcy, was determined to interpose obstacles to a peace, if the French king would trust her Majesty with Dunkirk, she on her part would consider herself justified before God and man in continuing the negotiations

* Boyer; Mémoires de Torcy.

either at Utrecht or anywhere else, without minding whether she had or had not the concurrence of partners who had conducted themselves with so much obstinacy and ingratitude towards her. She would not hesitate to conclude a separate peace with France, and leave her allies to accept such terms as should be arranged for them between the King and herself. A certain time should be allowed to them to signify their acceptance of those terms, and if they failed to do so within that time, the King might consider himself exonerated from all engagements as regarded them. England would withdraw from the Alliance, and leave her former friends to settle their affairs with France in any way they could. These assurances, conveyed in the emphatic language of Bolingbroke, told decisively in the French council. It could scarcely be doubted but that, if that country which had been the universal paymaster and the source of all that energy which had reduced France to her present condition, retired from the Alliance, the confederacy would no longer bear a formidable aspect, or even be likely to hold together. Louis decided, therefore, that it should be as the Queen desired. He issued the order for admitting the English troops to Dunkirk.*

During the time occupied by these negotiations the feelings of Ormond had been sorely tried by the cold and contemptuous manner adopted towards him by the other chiefs of the army. His disgrace was shared by the officers and even by the private soldiers he commanded. It was indeed high time that the English should withdraw from the company of their allies, for the hot blood of the islanders could ill brook the taunts that were levelled at them from all sides, and duels were of daily occurrence. A week after the fall of Quesnoy, Eugene sent notice to Ormond of his intention to march to Landrecy on the following day. The Duke, already irritated to the quick by previous insults, took umbrage at not having been informed of the Prince's design before, and perhaps with a view of excusing to the world his own intended departure, stigmatized the movement as a desertion of himself and the British troops. Upon the 16th of July the army separated, and the two portions took different routes. Ormond moved off with his

* Correspondence between Bolingbroke and Torcy; Mémoires de Torcy.

native regiments, and about a thousand Holsteiners, who were all the mercenaries who could be induced to follow his lead. At the close of the first day's march he proclaimed by sound of trumpet a suspension of arms with the French. Villars, with whom he was in intimate correspondence, published a similar proclamation as regarded the English on the same day.*

An eye-witness has stated that this proclamation was received by the British troops, officers as well as men, with every mark of indignation.† The feeling appears perfectly natural when the following circumstances are taken into consideration. In the first place we can readily understand that a soldier to whom the excitement of war has been downright pleasure, and who is inspired with that contempt for the enemy which constant success cannot fail to impart, should feel the same disgust at being restrained from his prey as a hound may feel at being restrained from pursuing a hare. The soldier of a hundred and fifty years ago unquestionably took far more interest in his profession, and concerned himself much more about politics than the soldier since standing armies became a permanent institution. The bravery of our present regiments has been proved in every quarter of the globe; yet those admirably-trained machines trouble themselves little about the origin of the quarrel in which they are engaged; and whenever their Government is pleased to declare war at an end, march back with indifference or satisfaction to the comforts and comparative ease of barrack life. Each man feels certain that, whether war or peace be the order of the day, his wages will be paid him, and that when his sinews have been worn out in the service of his country, some scanty provision will have been earned for his old age. But until very recent times the close of a war involved the almost total disbanding of the army. Thousands of men, rendered unfit for any peaceful calling, were at once thrown upon their own resources to find a livelihood. As a consequence the advent of peace was invariably marked by a great increase of beggars in the streets and of highwaymen on the roads. The country might rejoice; but the poor soldier with nothing but the gloomy alternative of

* Boyer; Lettres Historiques; Mémoires de Villars; St. Simon.
† Sergeant Milner, Journal of the Marches, &c.

starving or adopting a profession that led to the gallows before his eyes, could not but mourn.

But with those selfish considerations which might have moved the soldier of 1712 to deplore the termination of the war, however honourable, were undoubtedly mixed in the present instance a large share of patriotic feeling. He had been called into the field, he had been tantalized with the sight of an enemy whom he felt he could easily conquer. Yet with victory within his grasp he had been bidden first to remain inactive, and then to turn his back and march away. It would have been strange indeed if the cries that the English were cowards and traitors, which arose from Dutch and German comrades with whom he had been associated for years, had not penetrated to his soul. He felt that a deep stain had been inflicted on the national honour, that he had been used as a tool by a set of diplomatists. Nor is it easy upon calm consideration to justify the conduct of the English Ministers in their manner of withdrawing from the war. Let it be conceded that they had good cause to complain of the obstinacy and unreasonableness of their allies, that they were warranted in determining to conclude peace upon fair terms, and that, in view of the dogged opposition they had to encounter, no way was left them to execute this determination except a private arrangement with France. Yet surely it was not the time to negotiate such an arrangement while the armies were face to face. Had Ormond induced the troops in British pay to desert with him, what might have been the consequence? The Dutch and Imperialists who, relying on British faith, had entered the field, might have found themselves attacked and overwhelmed by the French. To force them to bend to the will of England was of course the object of the Ministers. It may be said that no harm would have accrued to them had they submitted with a good grace; nay, that the Emperor would have been spared a foolish and disastrous prolongation of the war. Yet to employ such a method of coercion is contrary to the principles of all alliances, and even to the principles of honour itself.

Ormond and Strafford now took counsel together. Both were highly incensed at what they regarded as the factious perverseness of the Dutch and Imperialists, and were not

wholly without apprehension that measures more effectual than taunts and scoffs might be employed against the British troops. A day or two before the separation an angry Dutch deputy had expressed to Ormond a hope that he had no intention of passing through any of the towns in Dutch occupation upon his road. This the Duke naturally interpreted as an intimation that his troops would be refused admission to most of the towns in the Netherlands. In this difficulty it was decided to adopt a suggestion which seems to have emanated from Louis himself, that he should secure Ghent and Bruges, so as to place his Government at a little more advantage in its dealings with the Dutch. These important cities were already in British occupation, and it soon appeared that they were almost the only places to which Ormond could resort for shelter. As the troops proceeded town after town upon the road closed its gates against them. British officers, even of the highest rank, were refused admission. Strafford applied in vain for permission to pass through Bouchain; Ormond was shut out from Douai. Eugene appears to have been offended by the incivility shown by the Dutch commandants, and protested that they had acted without orders; but little credit was attached to this statement. At length the army, after a whole week of rough marching, found itself safe within the walls of Ghent.*

The withdrawal of the British was immediately followed by a series of disasters to the Allied army. Eugene had commenced the siege of Landrecy, and to secure the passage of convoys from his magazines at Marchiennes had posted Keppel, Lord Albemarle, with eight thousand men, in an entrenched camp which had been constructed about Denain. Arnold van Keppel, the beloved and trusted friend of William III., had, after the decease of his master, returned to Holland, hastened to disencumber himself of everything English except the money, estates, and peerage he had got as favourite of the King of England, had resumed the position of a Dutch noble, and had been appointed to high station in the army of the States-general. Throughout the war he had approved himself an excellent officer, and while under the eye of Marlborough

* Boyer; Lettres Historiques; Lamberty; Mémoires de Torcy; St. Simon; Correspondence of Bolingbroke.

his career had not been chequered by a single calamity. But his commander was now Eugene, and the Prince appears to have acted with less than his usual circumspection in leaving a body of men isolated from the main force, and with insufficient means of making their escape across the Scheldt in case of their being attacked. So obvious, indeed, was the danger of Albemarle's position that Marlborough, upon being informed of it, expressed his apprehensions. Villars, with that quick eye for which he was renowned, saw his opportunity, formed his plan in profound secrecy, and executed it with the rapidity of lightning. Upon the afternoon of the 24th of July the Allies were surprised by the approach of an immense mass of infantry towards their intrenchments. The French came on with a rush, and with fixed bayonets. There was a deep ditch in front of the works, of which Villars had been informed; but he had decided not to consume time in preparing and carrying fascines. "Our fascines," said the gay Marshal, "shall be the bodies of the first fallen." Although taken almost unawares, the Allies stood to their defences, and poured several murderous discharges of cannon and musketry into the ranks of their assailants. But the French bore them without flinching, waded across the ditch, and swarmed over the breastwork, which, being constructed only of loose earth and stones, soon crumbled away. Then all resistance was at an end. Whole battalions of Germans flung down their arms, and fled headlong towards the Scheldt. Albemarle strove hard to preserve order among some regiments of Imperialists and Dutch which were still at a distance from the enemy, and tried to gain with them a post of security in the village of Denain; but so contagious was the panic that in a few minutes he found himself alone and surrounded by captors. The vanquished general was hurried into the presence of Villars, who had just entered the intrenchments, and was, after a little polite grimacing from the elated Frenchman, sent off a prisoner to Valenciennes. A dreadful fate awaited his helpless troops. There was but one pontoon bridge over the Scheldt, and this was choked by the baggage, which, upon some suspicion that an attack might be in contemplation, had been ordered for departure in the morning. With the French bayonets gleaming close in their rear the victims grew mad

with terror, and flung themselves by hundreds and thousands into the river, which was here a hundred yards broad. Among the crowd which perished in the deep waters were several Dutch and Imperial officers of high rank. More than two thousand prisoners were made. Those few who escaped with life and freedom owed their preservation either to their coolness or to singular good fortune. At the other end of the bridge, which soon broke down under the crush, appeared the advanced guard of the Allied army, gazing upon the horrible confusion, but utterly incapable of rendering the least assistance to their comrades. Eugene, upon hearing the first rumour of what Villars was about to undertake, had set his troops in motion, but too late to interfere with the Marshal's success.*

The loss of Denain drew after it the loss of Marchiennes, a small fortified town in which the Allied chiefs had stored up sufficient provisions and ammunition to last them through the whole campaign. The four thousand soldiers who constituted the garrison of this precious fortress endured a siege for a week, and then, perceiving no prospect of being relieved, surrendered at discretion. The Dutch commander, upon the first approach of the French, had sunk in the Scarpe five barges laden with gunpowder, and Villars upon reaching the town found the stream still running black, and quantities of fish floating dead upon the water. The Marshal, collecting his army, which had been scattered about for the reduction of a number of small forts, now hastened back to Landrecy with the full determination of offering battle to the Allied army. He found, however, that the siege had been already abandoned. Eugene, convinced of his inability to find provisions for his men after the loss of his magazines, had departed in the direction of Mons. Villars, almost beside himself with delight at this surprising turn of a campaign which at the outset had threatened France with utter ruin, betook himself to the easy task of recapturing Douai.

By the English public the intelligence of these sad events was not received with those feelings of grief and shame which Whigs, Dutch and Imperialists, were united in thinking it

* For details of the battle of Denain see the Lettres Historiques; Campagne de Flandre; Mémoires de Villars; St. Simon.

should have excited. In truth the circumstances were flattering to the vanity of the nation. Nothing could prove better the value of England to the Alliance than the fact that, as soon as English genius and valour were withdrawn from the confederacy, continuous prosperity turned to misfortune. That the genius had been misapplied and the valour wasted on projects foreign to the real interests of the country was now, notwithstanding the lamentations of Whig orators and writers, the all but universal opinion. There was a strong desire that the peace should be general; and it was hoped that the Dutch and Imperialists would be convinced by their disasters that, without the aid of England, it was useless for them to pursue the war. The Ministers were anxious that the suspension of arms should be formally proclaimed between France and England; but difficulties arose in the way of such an arrangement. Each power had its favourite ally, for whom it considered itself bound in honour to stipulate for advantages such as its antagonist would by no means admit. The intrepid spirit shown by the Duke of Savoy in throwing in his lot with the Allies, the unfortunate condition to which he would be reduced if he were abandoned to the vengeance of France, recommended his interests in a special manner to the consideration of the English Government. Louis felt himself to be under similar obligations to the Elector of Bavaria, who had been driven out of his dominions for espousing his cause. It was evident that unless each Government came to a clear understanding as to what each would grant, and what it was determined upon refusing, many months might be consumed in correspondence. This was intolerable to so impatient a spirit as Bolingbroke. He determined to shorten the work by a personal conversation with Torcy; and early in August set out for Paris in company with Prior. The two friends travelled under fictitious names; and as a regular packet service had been for some time established between Dover and Calais, were in hopes of passing unnoticed. But their precautions were in vain. Prior's face was too well known on the road to escape recognition, and a rumour of who the gentlemen were and their business ran before them the whole way to the capital. They at length reached the end of their journey, mortified with

the certainty that their undertaking would be blazoned all over Europe, wearied with the constant intrusions upon them of complimentary civic dignitaries and smiling hotel-keepers, but not ill pleased at the evidence they had seen of the good-will of the French people. Bolingbroke became the guest of Torcy's mother, and was speedily joined by the Minister, who posted from the Court at Fontainebleau to meet him.*

In ten busy days several points of difficulty were amicably adjusted. It was agreed that the right of succession to the Spanish crown should be declared in the Duke of Savoy next after Philip and his children, and that the Duke should have Sicily, which he might consider the Queen had obtained for him as a compensation for his services in the war. Torcy, however, firmly cut down his demands for a barrier in Dauphiny to reasonable limits. The affairs of the Elector occasioned more difficulty. The French Minister was urgent that her Majesty should join with his master in compelling his restoration to his dominions. Bolingbroke would consent to no arrangement which might involve the Queen in disputes with her Allies. Her withdrawal from the war, he argued, was surely a sufficient concession to France. It was too much to expect her to join in making demands which, if they did not meet with acceptance, might entail upon her the obligation of backing them by force of arms. Torcy, finding his adversary determined upon this point, ceased to pursue the matter.

The forms of renunciation which were to be made both by Philip of his rights to the French crown and by the French Princes of their rights to the Crown of Spain were next settled. The difficulty on this head had entailed a considerable amount of correspondence on the two Ministers. Never did the adversaries to peace deem their objections more unanswerable than when they descanted upon the futility of binding princes to renounce rights which were supposed to be of Divine origin. They could point to recent precedents to show that oaths taken by princes were no more binding than cobwebs. Upon the marriage of Louis XIII. with the Infanta of Spain there had been an agreement between the two Governments that the

* Mémoires de Torcy; Boyer; Lettres Historiques; Bolingbroke to Dartmouth, August 21; September 1.

children of the marriage should be for ever excluded from their rights to the Spanish crown. Three years after her marriage Anne of Austria had formally renounced her rights to that crown, and her renunciation had been adopted as a law by the Cortes of Castile. Yet Philip, the great-grandson of Anne, became King of Spain notwithstanding this law, and one of his first acts of royalty was to revoke so inconvenient a piece of legislation. But the most glaring instance of the faithlessness of princes was to be found in the conduct of Louis XIV. himself. Upon his marriage, in 1659, with Maria Theresa, all rights to the Spanish crown which might accrue to that Princess were renounced both by Louis and Maria in the most solemn form that priestly ingenuity could devise; and the renunciation was registered in the Parliament of Paris. Only six years after the marriage the King issued a manifesto declaring that he regarded his oath as of no validity, set up a claim to the Spanish Netherlands on behalf of his wife, and took possession of such provinces as he desired by main force. In the face of such examples it might well seem idle to administer any more oaths to French princes. Torcy himself was candid enough to admit that no dependence whatever could be placed upon them. How then were princes to be bound who had no consciences, and for whom religion had no terrors? Was there not some power in France which could constrain even Kings to keep their word? Bolingbroke naturally bethought himself of that ancient institution, the States-general. It was evident that the so-called Parliaments of the Kingdom were dependent upon the crown, mere servile assemblies always ready to register or revoke laws at the sovereign's pleasure. But the States-general, consisting of representatives sent from all parts of the kingdom, might surely be regarded as a national Parliament, whose laws, when they affected foreigners, could not be broken without tainting the whole nation with perfidy, and which even princes would not dare to infringe. The English Minister proposed therefore that a States-general should be convoked for the special purpose of adopting as laws the renunciations which it was desirable to make. His suggestion was reported to Louis, who listened to it with ineffable contempt. There was no power in France, such was the answer

returned, above that of the King, and his Majesty would not think of taking a step which might inoculate his subjects with new doctrines upon this point. Such being the case, there remained no alternative but to draw up the renunciations in the usual way, and to rely upon the oath-takers themselves finding it to be their interest to abide by them.

These matters settled, Bolingbroke was taken down to Fontainebleau and introduced to the Master of France. Louis referred with much respect to the Queen, and acknowledged the obligations under which he lay to her. Peace, he protested, was what he most earnestly desired, nor should the recent successes which had been obtained by his arms alter for one moment his determination to fulfil all the promises he had made. Bolingbroke found the whole Court in an ecstasy of delight at the triumphant career of Villars. The rapture of Louis, upon hearing of the fall of Marchiennes, had been so great that for an instant he forgot the immeasurable distance between king and subject. When his courtiers approached him with their congratulations, the proud old monarch for the first time in his life actually condescended to thank them.*

The English Minister returned home, leaving the French nobility charmed with his handsome person, the dignity of his manners, and his mastery of the French language. Immediately after his arrival a suspension of arms with France for four months was proclaimed in London. The bonfires and illuminations which the proclamation excited were considered as satisfactory tokens of the public joy.†

Meanwhile the conferences at Utrecht had been productive of nothing but feuds and recriminations. The Bishop of Bristol had, on the 27th of June, communicated to the other plenipotentiaries the terms for a general peace mentioned in the Queen's speech, and had proposed a general suspension of arms with France for the greater convenience of treating. The Dutch and Imperial Ministers at once referred to their Courts. The States-general was convened, and the result of its deliberations was to return a decided negative to the proposal. All the ex-

* Mémoires de St. Simon; Lettres Historiques. Bolingbroke was presented with a diamond valued at fifty thousand crowns. Prior received his Majesty's portrait set in diamonds.

† Lettres Historiques.

pense had been incurred of placing the army in the field; why then forego the advantages which that army would be certain to obtain? The couriers were free to come and go between Utrecht and Versailles; passports would always be granted to State messengers; where then was the necessity for an armistice? The Imperial plenipotentiaries coincided with the Dutch. The conferences, useless as they had now become, were at length suspended on account of a contemptible quarrel which arose between the Count de Rechteren, deputy for Ober Issel, and Ménager. As the coach of the former was passing by the Frenchman's residence on the day when the news of Villars' triumph at Denain reached Utrecht, some footmen who were idling at the door made faces at the Count's lackies. These complained to their master, who, instead of treating their complaint with contempt, chose to send to Ménager for satisfaction, and pressed his demands to such preposterous lengths as made it impossible for that plenipotentiary to comply. Then the ill-tempered Dutchman took the law into his own hands. His servants, acting under his orders, which he gave in a drunken fit, set upon Ménager's servants, and inflicted upon them a sound beating. The affair then became serious. The rights of the quarrel were now unquestionably transferred to the French side. The plenipotentiaries of Louis no longer thought it necessary to put up with the insolence of the Dutch. They in turn demanded satisfaction, and as the authorities at the Hague hesitated to grant it, declined to attend any more conferences.*

But although discussion had ceased at Utrecht, the Hague, where Ministers from all the Allied powers were collected as in a focus, exhibited a rare scene of diplomatic activity. Dutch, Imperial, Hanoverian, and Savoyard envoys were perpetually consulting together, framing remonstrances to the British Government, and encouraging each other to go on with the war. During the autumn a book entitled the "Sighs of Europe at the project of Peace contained in the Speech of the Queen of Great Britain to her Parliament," made its appearance in Holland, and found its way over the water. Only some private motive in the English Ministers, it was argued, could account

* This quarrel is related in great detail by Boyer.

for their entering into negotiations so scandalous and so prejudicial to the welfare of Europe. Yet it must have appeared on calm consideration to every reasonable man that, now that England had withdrawn from the confederacy, the war had become hopeless unless an event so fortunate occurred as the death of Anne, and the transferrence of her sceptre to the House of Hanover. The Imperial ambassadors boasted of the extraordinary levies their master was about to make, and their promises on this score still carried some value in Holland, although in England they excited nothing but derision. The poverty of the Imperial exchequer was now sufficiently understood in this country. It accounted for the facts that throughout the whole course of the war the Emperor had never been able to furnish anything like his proper quota of troops, and that even the few troops he did send always ran a considerable risk of being starved until some excuse had been framed for quartering them on the liberality of the wealthier Allies. The Emperor's inveteracy against peace, therefore, although sufficiently intelligible when it was remembered for how many years England and Holland had held forth to his imagination the hope of possessing Spain, caused little apprehension in this country so long as he stood alone. But matters assumed a serious complexion when the Dutch, for whose wealth, energy, and sturdiness of purpose the English entertained a well-founded respect, seemed determined in spite of all impediments to adhere to his cause. There was certainly a possibility that, if supported by the Republic, the Emperor might be enabled to keep the war alive for some time longer. Still one problem remained inscrutable to our politicians. Were the Dutch really able to find the vast sums of money which would be necessary to prolong the contest? Almost from the beginning their statesmen had been groaning over their exhausted resources, their difficulties in collecting the heavy taxes they were compelled to lay on the provinces, and putting up prayers to England to relieve them from their full share of their financial engagements. Yet now, if report spoke truly, they were secretly promising the Imperialists to supply wages for three times as many auxiliary troops as before, to take upon their backs not only their own burdens

but those which England had thrown down. Had all this whining about poverty then been merely a miserly stratagem, and were they now going to open their hoards and beggar themselves in reality for the chance of getting a few more towns from France than they could procure by quiet negotiation?

With such speculations, however, Bolingbroke declined to trouble his mind. His course was now clear. He had come to a thorough understanding with Torcy on the subject. If the various Allies persisted much longer in thwarting the Queen's measures to conclude a peace, she would hold herself discharged from all obligations to them, conclude a separate treaty with France, and leave them to arrange their affairs in any way they pleased. He was almost inclined to hope that they would continue in the same refractory mood, as it would save him and his colleagues a great deal of trouble. But if they changed their tone in time, showed becoming deference to the ascendancy of England, and behaved themselves like reasonable people, then, Bolingbroke explained to Torcy, her Majesty would be compelled, both by her sense of honour and doubtless also by Parliamentary pressure, to obtain for them a fair amount of satisfaction.

The struggle between English determination and Dutch obstinacy now, however, drew to an end. During the two months which succeeded the rupture of the conferences at Utrecht, the passions of the Republican statesmen cooled down rapidly. The false hopes with which the Whigs had inspired them that the reign of a Tory Government would be only ephemeral, were now dispelled. They could blind themselves no longer to the fact that that Government was firmly established in the royal favour, was supported by the most important branch of the legislature, and also to a great extent by public feeling. A fatal blight, moreover, seemed to have fallen over their military fortunes since the loss of Marlborough and the defection of England. The despised and insulted French were proceeding from conquest to conquest. Douai, a city which two years before had cost the Allies a siege of fifty-four days, surrendered to Villars in twenty-five, and Quesnoy and Bouchain fell next. Eugene had remained for some time in the neighbourhood, but want of provisions

had at length forced him to retire. His great anxiety now was to preserve those towns which had been won at so much cost and by so many years of hard fighting. The face of affairs was completely changed. The Allied soldiers, unaccustomed to a losing campaign, were sadly dispirited. The *Te Deum* was again and again chanted in Notre Dame by the orders of Louis, and all the pulpits in France were resounding with the praises of the Almighty, who, after so long averting His face from the nation, had hearkened to its prayers, and had stretched forth His right hand to abate the insolence of its enemies.

Convinced by all these circumstances of the uselessness of further opposition, the Dutch, early in October, began to show symptoms of a desire to make up matters with their English associates. A deputation from the States-general waited upon the Queen's plenipotentiaries, and laid before them a resolution in which their High Mightinesses expressed their desire of joining with her Majesty in all measures necessary for the accomplishment of peace. The gentlemen further informed the Bishop and Strafford that the Assembly would be willing to give up Lille. But they represented very earnestly the importance of their retaining Tournay, and begged the English to use their influence that Condé, a town still in French possession, might be added to their list. Their barrier, it seemed, would in their opinion be incomplete without these two fortresses. The plenipotentiaries, pleased to find that the Dutch were abating a little from the extravagance of their previous pretensions, at once sent notice to the French that Lille, a city which Louis was determined should be restored to him, offered no further impediment to the negotiations. But times had completely changed: the French armies were fast recovering their prestige, and the effect of their successes upon the Master of France was such as might be expected. It was evident that Louis was again becoming the same overbearing, dictatorial monarch as of old. The defection of England from the Alliance, and the ill-feeling which the Government of England bore to its former friends placed, as he knew, the Dutch and the rest of the confederates very much at his mercy. Lille was now offered to him: in a very little time the Republic

would be only too glad to make a higher bid for peace. He instructed his plenipotentiaries, therefore, that the moment was not yet arrived at which the conferences might be renewed with advantage.

The fisherman who released the genie from his box without having first bound that potent spirit by an inviolable compact, had soon cause to repent his indiscretion; and the complacency with which the English Ministers regarded their work must have been occasionally marred by apprehensions of perfidy on the part of the French king. Yet everything continued to progress smoothly between the two Governments. It had been arranged between Torcy and Bolingbroke that envoys should be immediately despatched to the Courts of Madrid and Paris to be witnesses of the acts of renunciation which were to be made by Philip and the French princes. Within a fortnight after Bolingbroke's return, therefore, Lord Lexington, a nobleman who had been employed by William on diplomatic missions, departed for Madrid. Under his supervision the act was drawn up, and in his presence the solemnity was performed by which it became a law of the kingdom. On the 5th of November the fifty-eight deputies from towns who composed the Cortes, the members of the Council, and the chief officers civil and military of the realm assembled at the Palace of Buen Retiro. Philip, from the throne, acquainted the Assembly with the choice which had been offered him by his grandfather of renouncing the crown of Spain or his prospects of inheriting the crown of France, and related how the touching proofs of affection which had been afforded to him by his Spanish subjects had determined him to accept the latter alternative. The act was then read aloud by which he renounced all right to the French crown for himself and his descendants; and he swore, with his hand on the gospels, to abide by his renunciation. The signing of the act by the King, and by every one present was then performed; and its registration by the Cortes concluded the ceremony.*

Hamilton, who had been a steady supporter of the Ministry, was selected as the envoy to the French Court, for the purpose of witnessing the acts of renunciation of the Spanish crown

* Lettres Historiques; Boyer; Burnet; Lamberty; St. Simon.

which were to be made by the Dukes of Berry and Orleans. The choice of a nobleman who was universally reputed to be an adherent of the Pretender, and who not many years back had been arrested on suspicion of being privy to the scheme of invasion, naturally gave rise to much speculation. The Ministers had insisted so peremptorily upon the expulsion of the Stuarts from the French dominions that Louis had, sorely against his inclinations, sent an intimation to the family that their departure was necessary; and immediately after the return of Bolingbroke from Paris they had commenced their wanderings by retiring into the Duchy of Lorraine. That such a man as Hamilton should now be appointed to look after British interests in France seemed not a little inconsistent with the ostensible zeal of the Government against the Pretender. But all the hopes and fears which this singular selection excited were soon set at rest by the sudden and tragical fate which overtook the Duke.

He had been during eleven years engaged in a Chancery suit with the notorious bully Mohun. On the 13th of November the parties met at the chambers of a master: some of Mohun's witnesses were examined, and the Duke impeached their credibility. This interference brought upon him much abuse from his adversary, who was, as usual with him, under the influence of wine. Hamilton, however, conducted himself according to all accounts with much moderation, and was, therefore, not a little surprised at receiving on the following day a challenge from his Lordship. It came by the hand of General Macartney, a hare-brained officer who laboured under the grievance of having been dismissed the service for speaking disrespectfully of the Ministers, and who bore, in consequence, a wild hatred to Tories. This person acted the part of inflaming the disputants which is commonly attributed to military men who get the conduct of an affair of honour. A meeting was arranged, and came off two days afterwards in Hyde Park, at an early hour of the morning. So intense was the love of fighting in all present, that not only the principals but the seconds engaged. Hamilton and Mohun, after a few passes, both fell mortally wounded, when the seconds, leaving their own sport, ran to look after them. Mohun died on the spot,

and the Duke while he was being carried to his coach. Macartney at once walked quickly off, and escaped; but Colonel Hamilton, a cousin of the Duke, and who had acted as his second, allowed himself to be taken into custody by the park-keepers. He alleged in his depositions that his Grace died of a thrust which was treacherously dealt him by Macartney while he was lying on the grass: but neither the opinions of surgeons respecting the wound, nor his own conduct in permitting Macartney to escape so easily, could be reconciled with this version of the affair. A reward of three hundred pounds was offered by the Government for the apprehension of the General, to which the Duchess of Hamilton added a further three hundred. Macartney, however, showed no more than a proper degree of prudence in remaining abroad until a change of Government opened to him the prospect of a fair trial. After the accession of George he surrendered, and was tried at the King's Bench for murder; but the jury seem to have formed the conclusion that the duel was fairly fought, and convicted the culprit only of manslaughter.*

Thus miserably perished a man who had played one of the most important parts of this reign. The charm of Hamilton's manners must have been very great; for notwithstanding the constant disappointment caused by the flippancy, to call it by no worse name, of his political conduct, we nowhere find him censured with much bitterness by any party. Nor is it necessary to impute this unusual kindness to his memory to any feeling of compassion for his unhappy fate, as the savage hearts of the political writers of that generation were impervious alike to justice or humanity. His abilities were considerable; his mind was highly cultivated; he spoke well; he possessed in perfection the art of attaching friends and even of preserving their attachment when his treachery must have been manifest to them. To his mysterious but certainly most perfidious conduct during the fierce debates in the Scottish Parliament of 1706, both parts of this island perhaps owe the blessings which have flowed from the Union. The Tories bewailed of course the loss of an influential partisan; yet the only true mourning

* Boyer; Lettres Historiques; Journal to Stella; Lockhart's Memoirs.

for him came from the party he had most deceived—the Jacobites. That he corresponded with the exiled family, that his letters expressed the most fervent affection and devotion to their interests, that they in return regarded him as the main pillar of their cause, and entrusted him with all their manifold plots and schemes, are facts now established beyond dispute. Yet there is ample reason for believing that Hamilton was no more sincere in his professions of zeal for the Stuarts than Marlborough or Godolphin, and that his object was no other than theirs,—to provide for his safety in case, by a revolution of the political wheel, the Stuarts should recover their throne. He was not the man to set dignities, fortune, and life at stake for the mere sentimental or religious attachment to a fallen dynasty. He was always ready indeed to enter into intrigues and discuss plans for a revolution; but the moment he perceived that his position was becoming one of danger, he slunk into the background, and left his friends to shift for themselves. His death therefore was in reality no misfortune to the Jacobites. No project of theirs would have stood much chance which depended for its success upon the exertions of this cunning and selfish nobleman.

He had been recently, however, a steady supporter of the Government, and the Tory press therefore adopted the story told by Colonel Hamilton as to the manner of his death, and set up a howl of indignation. The writers on this side were just at this moment well supplied with matter of vituperation. Not only had one of their chiefs been barbarously assassinated by a Whig, but some rascal, presumed of course to be a Whig, had just failed in a diabolical attempt upon the life of the Treasurer. A box was delivered one morning to Oxford, which, as he was employed in shaving himself, he requested Swift to open. It was found to contain the stock and lock of a pistol, with two barrels made of inkhorns pointing in contrary directions. The barrels were loaded to the muzzle; the lock was full cocked, and a string was attached to the trigger, which the sender of the box probably calculated would be pulled in opening the package. To the circumstance that Swift, instead of slipping the string over the box, cut it with a penknife, English literature may be indebted for the rich

addition of "Gulliver's Travels." The scoundrel who sent this infernal machine was never discovered.

To such a state of nervousness was the public mind reduced by the efforts of Tory newsmongers, that the most ordinary and trivial incidents sufficed to create a sensation. A party of roystering gentlemen could not meet at a tavern in the City and kindle a bonfire on King William's birthday, without giving rise to a report that the Whigs were urging on the mob to sack London. Three innocent Germans, lovers perhaps of the picturesque, approaching the private grounds of Windsor Castle, created a suspicion that some horrid design upon the Queen was on foot; and the Ministers were not ashamed to foster the absurd terror of her faithful subjects by doubling her guards. Three drunken officers who swaggered about the streets of Exeter, and drank Marlborough's health and confusion to his enemies, were made prisoners of State, and only regained their liberty after repeated assertions that the "enemies" they meant were the French.*

* Boyer; Lettres Historiques.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Earl of Shrewsbury was selected to supply the place which had been destined for Hamilton at the Court of France. He sailed for Calais towards the end of the year; and the same yacht which conveyed him brought back the Duke d'Aumont as the King's ambassador to England. The chief point in this gentleman's instructions seems to have been to make himself agreeable to everybody. He had been liberally supplied with money for purposes which Torcy did not think fit to mention in his memoirs, and he soon rendered himself extremely popular among the lower orders from a pleasant habit in which he frequently indulged of throwing handfuls of coin from his carriage window.*

The month of November was productive of another event which produced very opposite emotions among the politicians of the contending factions. Marlborough thought it prudent to retire from the country which he had rendered so illustrious by his talents, and to seek a temporary refuge in Germany. That the immediate cause of his withdrawal was the persecution to which he was subjected by the Government can admit of no doubt. Yet it is equally clear that that persecution was provoked by his own conduct. Oxford and Bolingbroke were not the men to adopt unnecessary measures of severity, and their letters show how reluctant they were to exert their power against one whose very name was sufficient to enlist the sympathies of millions. But during the summer Marlborough's house at St. Albans had been filled with the Whig chiefs. The conversation which then passed may have been innocuous; yet the gathering of such decided enemies of the Government as

* Burnet.

Godolphin, Sunderland, Halifax, Cowper and Walpole, might well seem fraught with political significance. The hero was soon made to feel the effects of his imprudence. The Attorney-General commenced proceedings against him in the Court of Queen's Bench for the recovery of the two and a half per cent. which had been deducted from the pay of the foreign troops, and which the House of Commons had declared to be public money. He was at the same time threatened by private parties, perhaps at the instance of the Ministers, with a suit of which the history reflects little credit upon the generosity or the justice of the Queen.

That the intention of Anne, formed at a time when Marlborough was regarded by her with reverential affection, and was an object almost of idolatry to the nation, was to erect the mansion of Blenheim at her own expense, is as clear as any matter of history can well be. For a considerable period she had taken a lively interest in the progress of the work. Sir John Vanburgh's model of the proposed building remained by her orders in the gallery of Kensington palace. Her intention was even noticed in the recitals of an Act of Parliament passed in 1706. Until the end of 1709 the warrants for payment of the workmen were duly issued by Godolphin, and paid at the Treasury, and in this manner two hundred thousand pounds had been expended. Then came the quarrels between the Queen and the Duchess, the decline of Marlborough in the royal esteem, the dismissal of the Whigs and the advent of the Tories to power. Her Majesty at once drew tight her purse-strings. A little more money was reluctantly doled out in 1711; but on the 1st of June, 1712, Anne gave positive orders that nothing further should be allowed for Blenheim. A complicated state of things ensued. A sum of about twelve thousand pounds remained due to the contractors, who becoming convinced of the hopelessness of obtaining payment from the Queen, endeavoured to shift the responsibility upon Marlborough. No action of his could be adduced by which he had rendered himself liable; but his friends had not always behaved with the same prudence. The case of the contractors depended mainly upon a document by which Godolphin, acting professedly on the Duke's behalf, appointed Vanburgh surveyor of the

works, and authorized him to contract with others for materials and labour.*

It is probable, however, that other considerations besides the persecution he apprehended from the Government impelled Marlborough at this season to retire from the country. The Whigs imputed to the rival party as a class a strong leaning towards the Pretender. Some of the most distinguished members of the House of Commons made little concealment of their Jacobitism. Many persons who had constant access to the Queen were also suspected to be zealous workers for the cause; and although there is now ample reason to believe that their labour was utterly thrown away, the bare suspicion of what they were endeavouring to accomplish kept the Whigs in a fever of anxiety. The hatred which this party bore to the Ministers who had ousted them from their places was tempered neither by charity nor reason. Ever since 1710 they had taken a savage delight in propagating the report that the main object of this Tory Government was to procure the repeal of the act in favour of Hanover, and to provide for the succession of the Papist James. In support of this malicious asseveration not a vestige of proof could be produced, but by dint of constantly repeating it, they wrote and talked themselves into a firm belief of its truth. The Hanoverian envoy, who never consorted with any but Whigs, and who from the commencement took up a position of hostility against the Ministers, frequently communicated to his court the alarming intelligence that there could be no doubt of Oxford's engagements to the Pretender.†

It was impossible, even for a mind so calm and rational as Marlborough's, to exist in such an atmosphere of panic without being affected by it. It is evident that he thought the succession of the Hanoverian family in real danger. In that succession his fortunes were deeply involved. His hollow professions to the Stuart family had failed, as they deserved to fail, in restoring him to the good graces of the family he had so deeply injured. Should the Stuarts succeed, after all, in recovering

* Coxe's Memoirs; the Duke of Marlborough plaintiff, Strong and others respondents.

† Macpherson, Original Papers.

their throne, what could be expected by the man who, being a beloved and trusted servant, had first betrayed his master to the enemy, and had since protested that his wishes were to restore him, while labouring with all his might to make his banishment eternal? The state of the Queen's health was such that it could not be long before this momentous question of the succession was decided. It was but prudent then to provide against an adverse issue. By going abroad Marlborough placed his person in safety, and might still exert all his influence to promote the succession of Hanover as effectually as if he remained in England. He was not unmindful of his property. Fifty thousand pounds were remitted to Cadogan for investment in Holland, to provide, the Duchess declared, the means of subsisting abroad in case of the Stuarts returning. His estates in England he made over to his sons-in-law as trustees.*

Several members of the Council were disposed to obstruct his departure; but the good-natured and peace-loving Oxford was only too happy to make a bridge for the retreat of so powerful an enemy, and procured him a passport. The hero, with a suite of only two gentlemen and a few domestics, arrived at Ostend by the ordinary packet-boat in the middle of December, where he found the whole city, forewarned of his approach by Cadogan, assembled to meet him at the landing-place. He passed under salutes from all the batteries and the shipping of the harbour to the governor's residence, remained there a night, and then went on to Antwerp. From the commandant of that city, the Marquis de Terracina, the same Spaniard who had, after the battle of Ramilies, thrown open his gates to the Allies, he received a rapturous welcome. Without stopping, however, for more than a single night, he continued his journey through Maestricht to Aix-la-Chapelle, where he expected to be joined by the Duchess. At every town on the road the applause of the common people was so hearty, and the desire of the authorities, military and municipal, to show him every honour so manifest, as to render it doubtful whether the ordinary

* Marlborough's departure from the country excited considerable speculation as to the causes. See the remarks of Boyer and Burnet. Swift, intimate as he was with the Ministers, could not penetrate the mystery. See his Journal to Stella. According to Cowper's Diary, Anne remarked, "that the Duke had done wisely in going abroad."

idolatry of heroes was not in this case reinforced by a strong feeling against the hero's persecutors. The house in which he slept was invariably watched by a guard of honour, and in the morning a company of soldiers was commissioned to escort him to the next town. At Aix he remained for several weeks, receiving visits from distinguished foreigners who flocked to him from great distances to pay their compliments and assure him of their sympathy.*

Notwithstanding these demonstrations in favour of Marlborough the business of the peace made satisfactory progress. The Dutch, as their indignation cooled, were fast becoming sensible of the fruitlessness of any further opposition. It was now evident to them that, with the exception only of the very dubious assistance the Emperor could afford, they could look nowhere for support in continuing the war with France. The King of Portugal had been the first member of the Confederacy to follow the example of England and to proclaim a suspension of arms with France and Spain. It would be unfair to impute his secession merely to want of spirit. The chief defence of his dominions during the war had been the British regiments; and these were now withdrawn. The invasion, therefore, of twenty thousand Spaniards under the energetic Marquis de Bay, who laid siege to Campo Mayor, one of the strongest of the Portuguese fortresses, quickly produced the desired effect of inclining his Majesty and his councillors to peace. The Duke of Savoy had during the year repudiated in terms of great indignation the allegation that he too meditated a suspension of arms; but his inactivity, his bitter feuds with the Imperial Court and his negotiations with the English Ministers gave a very doubtful complexion to his intentions. The mercenary troops of Hanover, Prussia, Denmark, and the petty German princes could of course be always had if the Dutch could afford to pay for them; but even such enthusiasts for war as Heinsius and Buys felt that for such lavish expenditure the Republic was inadequate. The English ministers maintained their resolute attitude. They threatened to enter into a separate peace with France; and from the vigour with which they conducted their negotiations with Louis there seemed every

* Boyer; Lettres Historiques.

probability that they would execute their threat, and leave their refractory confederates to scramble out of the war as best they could. In December, therefore, when Strafford, after having passed a month in England, returned to the Hague, he found his Dutch opponents in a state of mind very different from that in which they had been during the summer.

He at once gave notice to Heinsius that he had matter of importance to communicate, and requested that a deputation might attend him. One deputy accordingly from each province, together with Heinsius and another grand functionary, waited upon him at his residence. He began by expressing his wishes to see the ancient friendship between her Majesty and the Republic revived, and his regrets that the love of war and the private interests of individuals should have given occasion for any coldness. The refusal of their High Mightinesses to concur in the suspension of arms proposed by the Queen had already cost them dearly. He hoped, therefore, that they would not, by persisting in their opposition, bring upon themselves still greater calamities. After administering this lecture Strafford proceeded to state that her Majesty would bind herself to procure Tournay for them if, on their part, they would, without raising any more objections or making any new demands, join cordially with her in concluding a peace. The terms upon which she was willing to treat with the French king were nearly the same as those she had mentioned in her speech to the Parliament. But there was also another matter concerning which it was of the highest importance to both nations that there should be an amicable settlement. A treaty had been concluded between her Majesty and the Republic, of which the object was to secure to the Dutch, upon the conclusion of peace, military possession of numerous towns in the Netherlands. In England many of the conditions of this treaty were considered disadvantageous to her Majesty's subjects, and had aroused a strong feeling of indignation against the authors or advisers of them. Should their High Mightinesses under these circumstances attempt to hold the English to their engagements, there could not fail to arise constant jealousies and misunderstandings between the two nations. He had therefore brought with him a revised treaty to which he hoped

they would agree. He then alluded briefly to what the Queen wished to be done for the Duke of Savoy, and what she was disposed to allow for the Elector of Bavaria, and concluded by offering the States-general three weeks to consider what course they would pursue. If at the expiration of that time they still showed any unwillingness to concur with her Majesty's plan of peace, she would hesitate no longer, but settle her terms with France without them.*

Copies of the new barrier treaty and of the Queen's plan of peace were at once communicated to the seven provinces of the Republic; and a fortnight of suspense and anxiety followed. At a meeting of the States-general on the 14th of December the spirit of opposition flamed high; but the assembly separated without passing any resolution. Strafford employed the interval in private conferences with some of the leading Dutchmen—Buys among the number—and paid a visit secretly to Amsterdam to try his powers of persuasion upon the influential magnates of that city. At length the voices of the provinces began to be heard, and proved that the general sense of the Dutch people was in favour of peace. The province of Utrecht was the first to pronounce its readiness to give in to the Queen's plan; and the other provinces, with some unimportant reservations, followed the example. The feeling of the Republic was embodied in a letter sent by the States-general to the Queen. Their High Mightinesses intimated their resolution to accept the revised barrier treaty and to join with her Majesty in negotiating with France on the footing she proposed.†

The Dutch were now in that frame of mind which had been so long desired by the English Government. It was therefore of importance that the new barrier treaty should be pushed on to conclusion before any possible vicissitude of the war should induce them to alter their sentiments. The proposals now made were bitterly mortifying to a people whose ambition had lately aspired so high; but no person can examine the articles of the treaty of 1709 without agreeing with Swift and with the resolutions of the House of Commons, that they were greatly prejudicial to the interests of Great Britain. The number of

* Boyer.

† Boyer; Swift's Four Last Years of the Queen; Historical Mercury; Lettres Historiques; Mémoires de Torcy; Lamberty.

towns in the Spanish Netherlands in which the Dutch were to be at liberty to place garrisons was now curtailed. Instead of the provision for their introducing garrisons into all the other Spanish fortresses upon the mere prospect of a war breaking out, they were now to enjoy this privilege only in case of there being actual war. Stringent articles, moreover, were framed for securing to her Majesty's subjects an equal footing with the Dutch as regarded the commerce of the Belgian cities.

This matter arranged, it was time to compose the foolish breach which had arisen between the Dutch and French plenipotentiaries, and which had led to the suspension of the conferences at Utrecht. Torcy and Bolingbroke had long since agreed that the Count de Rechteren was drunk at the time he ordered his servants to chastise the servants of Ménager. The Count had since resigned his post; but Louis had not as yet thought it politic to profess himself satisfied. The English plenipotentiaries now took upon themselves the office of mediators. Three of the Dutch deputies repaired to the house of the first plenipotentiary of France, prepared to state that the Count's action had been without the knowledge or sanction of the States-general. But at the first word Marshal U'xelles interposed, and declared that his Majesty was now perfectly satisfied that there had been no acquiescence on the part of the States. All parties then sat down to an amicable dinner.

Even the Imperial ministers at this time showed symptoms of a desire to make peace. It was no agreeable reflection to Charles that he would have to put up with the loss of Spain, a country in which he had passed some years with the title and occasionally with the real power of a king, and in which he flattered himself that his princely qualities, that is to say, his dignified comportment, his piety, and his fine clothes, had made an impression upon the hearts at least of the Catalans. Yet the Imperial cabinet had lucid intervals when the comparative resources of the Empire and of France were justly weighed in the balance, and when the conclusion forced itself upon the minds of the members that abstract justice must sometimes in this world succumb to superior force. The Emperor and his counsellors had in fact determined in sadness to think no more of Spain, and proposed to evacuate the Peninsula on the condi

tion, and the proviso did honour to their sense of gratitude and humanity, that Philip should accord a free pardon to his Catalonian subjects. But their hearts were sore at the treachery which they conceived they had experienced from their English allies, and having conceded so much, they were in no mood to abate any further in their terms. They insisted on the restitution of Strasburg, the cession of Landau, and the demolition of fort Saarlouis. The proposition of the King of France on behalf of that rebellious member of the Empire, the Elector of Bavaria, they rejected with indignation. The French plenipotentiaries with much politeness allowed Zinzendorf to declaim about the wrongs of his master as long as he pleased. Two years back, when Marlborough and his victorious army were hanging like a thunder-cloud over France, such terms of peace as the Emperor demanded would have been considered perfectly moderate and reasonable. Louis now thought them simply absurd.

But about the Imperial demands, whether just or unjust, the English Ministers troubled themselves so little as scarcely ever to allude to them in a serious vein. Matters which they judged to be of far deeper moment were occuping their thoughts throughout the month of January, 1713. They had at first supposed that the period of four months during which hostilities were to cease would suffice to settle all the questions pending between England and France. Yet the time expired; a second suspension had to be proclaimed; and still the French king held out perversely upon two points which the English Ministers considered of grave importance to the interests of Great Britain. Louis, having agreed to cede the whole of Newfoundland and Nova Scotia to the Queen, insisted upon reserving a right of fishing and drying fish on portions of the coast, a reservation which the Ministers knew would not meet with the approval of the Parliament, and which would infallibly involve the fishermen of the two nations in perpetual feuds. The second and more important point in dispute related to an article in the treaty of commerce, which Prior was endeavouring to arrange at Paris. The French king had in June conceded the general proposition that English subjects should, as regarded the duties payable on goods imported into France, be placed on

a footing as favourable as that accorded to the people of any other country in the world. At that time his Majesty was so anxious to obtain the suspension of arms, that the consequences of this concession were not very closely examined. But as soon as he and his counsellors had leisure to reflect upon what they had done, they became sensible that the English Government had entrapped them into terms which would be utterly destructive to the commercial interests of France. England had a quantity of cherished manufactures, such as of brandy, linen, paper, and silk. It had been during the last half century the aim of the legislature to protect these manufactures by imposing high and, in fact, prohibitive duties upon all French goods which might be brought into competition with them. Indeed it was the general opinion that without such legislative protection these manufactures would inevitably perish. In some instances the happy climate of France produced naturally a far superior article; and in all cases the low rate of wages which satisfied the French workman would enable the proprietor to undersell his English competitor if there was any approach to free trade. It was complacently computed by our writers on commercial subjects, that the annual saving to the nation by making such commodities at home which would otherwise be brought from France amounted to more than a million sterling, and that in addition the manufacture of them supplied thousands of families with the means of subsistence. To Louis, however, it appeared obvious that, if English productions were admitted into France at easy rates, while some of the principal productions of France were virtually excluded from the English market, the advantage of the treaty would be all on one side. He demanded, therefore, as a preliminary to concluding it, that the Parliament should reduce these protective duties. Bolingbroke, who in this instance showed little acquaintance with the general feeling of his countrymen, was struck with the justice of the demand, conceded the principle, and undertook to procure the reduction. This concession, as will afterwards appear, arrayed the whole commercial interest of England against the treaty. Still Louis did not think it as yet safe to conclude the business in that unqualified form which the Ministers required. With more sagacity than he had hitherto exhibited concerning

English affairs, he doubted whether the Government would succeed in persuading the Parliament to adopt a more reasonable scale of duties. He was at all events determined not to run any risk by the refusal. He consented, therefore, that the moderate tariff which had been framed in 1664 should be again applicable to the importation into his kingdom of English goods; but he excepted four classes of merchandise, of which Great Britain exported considerable quantities,—whalebone and oil, woollen manufactures, sugar and salted fish. As soon, he declared, as he was satisfied that the Parliament had reduced the duties on French goods imported into England to a level exactly proportionable to the duties which would be payable on English goods entering France, then the restrictions should be abolished.

Bolingbroke was in great indignation at conduct which he regarded as a gross breach of faith on the part of Louis; but he was, moreover, not a little alarmed by the prospects before himself and his colleagues. Looking at the question by itself France was no doubt justified in claiming to send her produce into England upon terms as favourable as English produce could be sent into France. But it must be remembered that the intervention of England had saved France on the very brink of ruin. Surely in return for a deed of humanity which had drawn down upon her the reproaches of all Europe she was entitled to expect some advantages in a treaty of commerce. The principle that England was to profit by the treaty had been from the outset of the negotiations thoroughly admitted by the King. Yet if she were not to have the benefit of the tariff of 1664 until she had reduced her duties on brandies, silks, and so forth to a level which would permit the distillers of Languedoc and the loom-masters of Lyons to inundate her markets with their cheaper and superior goods, it was evident that she would not be a gainer at all. Nay, the chances were that France would have the best of the bargain. This then was to be the return for all her kindness. This worthless treaty the Ministers would have to offer as their excuse for those clandestine negotiations which had roused against them such hosts of enemies in England, Hanover, Holland, and the Empire. In truth the Ministers now found

themselves in a situation of great difficulty. To meet the Parliament before every question had been satisfactorily arranged with France was more than they dared. The Houses, which usually assembled in November, had been again and again prorogued in the vain hope that Louis might return to a sense of justice and gratitude. The delay naturally aroused suspicion, and the Whigs were setting in circulation a report that the King of France was true to his character, and having been released from his predicament, was now trying to shuffle out of his engagements to the Queen. Prior besieged Torcy: Bolingbroke wrote letter after letter to urge Prior to his work. "We stand on the brink of a precipice," he said with his fiery energy; "but the French stand there too." "Tell Monsieur de Torcy," he continued, "that he may get Robin and Harry hanged; but affairs will soon run back into so much confusion that he will wish us alive again." He at the same time instructed Shrewsbury to inform the French Ministers that, if the Parliament met while any uncertainty about peace remained, her Majesty's Government would be under the necessity of asking for supplies on a war scale. As a last resource he proposed that immediately after the conclusion of peace there should be a meeting of Commissioners in London to arrange a tariff which might suit the interests of both nations. Louis accepted the proposal, and an article to this effect was added to the treaty. The claim of France to fish at certain seasons, and off a certain part of the coast of Newfoundland, was conceded.*

The first week of March had passed before this important subject had been settled, even in this unsatisfactory manner. A week later a grand assembly of the French peers, civil and ecclesiastical, was held in the Palais de Justice. The Procureur General presented the King's letters patent revoking those letters by which his Majesty had in 1700 preserved the right of his grandson to the crown of France. Two acts were then read aloud, by which the Dukes of Berry and Orleans renounced for themselves and their descendants all claim to the crown of Spain. The ceremony was witnessed by Shrewsbury, Prior,

* Correspondence of Bolingbroke.

and the Duke d'Ossuna, the Spanish envoy, from a box in the great hall.*

Thus had the last serious obstacle to peace been removed. The English Ministers were burning with anxiety to conclude the two treaties of peace and commerce. The ballads and lampoons which oozed from the press, the uneasy feeling which prevailed in the City, kept them on thorns; and the fear was never absent from their minds that even their steadiest adherents would take umbrage at delays of which it was impossible to render any public explanation. Another prorogation of the Parliament to the 9th of April had been issued, making the seventh. Yet still the plenipotentiaries at Utrecht kept holding futile conferences with the Dutch and Imperial Ministers, who seemed determined to contest every word in every article of the treaty. "There is a necessity," Bolingbroke wrote to them, "of signing immediately, either in conjunction with the Allies or without them. The first course is, to be sure, the best; but the last is infinitely preferable to a delay of four-and-twenty hours." Anne herself was so infected with the anxiety she perceived in her Ministers, as to declare her intention of writing to the plenipotentiaries with her own hand.†

Thus urged on to action, the Bishop of Bristol and Strafford at length gave notice that on the 11th of April they would sign their treaties with France, expressing a hope that the other plenipotentiaries would sign theirs on the same day. There was just time for the Dutch to repair to the Hague, and to collect the sense of the authorities there, which happily was in favour of concluding the business. The Imperial plenipotentiaries remained stubborn, and strove hard to induce the English to defer the day until they had received fresh advices from Vienna. With the best wishes, however, that the peace should be general, the Bishop and Strafford had now become convinced that the difference between the demands of the Emperor and the concessions Louis was disposed to make was too wide to be settled by diplomacy. That half Europe should be deprived of the blessings of peace while the most dilatory of all cabinets, and the power which had contributed least of all

* A full account of the ceremony is given in the Lettres Historiques.
† Bolingbroke to Lord Privy Seal, March 19—30; to Strafford same date.

to the success of the common cause, was debating whether it could allow France to retain Strasburg, whether it could disgorge the cherished spoils of Italy, and how far it was consistent with the Imperial dignity and suited the Imperial exchequer to consent to the restoration of the Elector of Bavaria, was too much for mortal patience. The French plenipotentiaries had already submitted to the English an outline of what the King would concede to the House of Austria and of what he was determined the House of Austria should concede to him; and of this outline the Bishop and Strafford had signified their approval. They remained, therefore, firm to their determination of signing on the 11th; and that day witnessed the close—as far as England, Holland, Savoy, Prussia, and Portugal were concerned—of the war of the Spanish succession. Before signing their treaties the English plenipotentiaries waited upon Zindendorf with the terms of peace which the French king was willing to make with the Emperor, and acquainted him that his master would be allowed until the 1st of June to signify his acceptance of them.

From the history which has been given of the negotiations for a general peace, the reader will already have formed a fair acquaintance with the contents of the various treaties now signed between France and her enemies. It may be worth while, however, to make some comments on the results of a war which the Allies had carried on for eleven years with such amazing success in the field.

The objects of the confederation between the Emperor, the King of Great Britain, and the States-general, as expressed in the treaty of the 7th of September, 1701, were to procure for the first-mentioned power "satisfaction in the Spanish succession," and for the other Allies security for their dominions and commerce. These objects, however, are more particularly defined in the fifth article of the treaty, which stipulates that the confederates shall, among other things, endeavour to recover the Spanish Netherlands to be a barrier between Holland and France, and the duchy of Milan, the kingdoms of Naples and Sicily, and the lands and islands upon the coast of Tuscany, for the Emperor's security. From this treaty of alliance can easily be made out what the Empire and Holland proposed to gain by

a war, but not what were the motives of England in assisting them. For these motives we must recur to the domestic history of our country. The statesmen who had then the control of affairs considered that there was a necessity to check the exorbitant and constantly increasing power of France. Every accessible power on the Continent had been successively attacked and despoiled. Sooner or later it would be our turn to experience the heavy hand of the oppressor. Impediments would be thrown in the way of our commerce, the main source of that opulence which distinguished us in the community of nations; and a still greater calamity was to be apprehended. It seemed not improbable that, as soon as the all-powerful tyrant had accomplished his designs elsewhere, he would turn his thoughts to the subjugation of England. An army, against which it would be idle for our gentry and ploughboys to think of contending, would be set on our shores. The Pretender would be placed on the throne; the sturdy independent spirits of our countrymen would be broken to his will; and the light, the beauty, the glory of our island would be extinguished in slavery and beneath the abominations of the Romish church. It was the worst of policies to remain idle while the fire was advancing towards us. To fall upon the tyrant sword in hand before his design was fully matured, was at once the most prudent and the most honourable method of averting our destruction.

Such were the motives which impelled the governing body of England to embark the nation in a great war. Fortune was singularly propitious to the Allies. By the close of the campaign of 1706, or at all events of that of 1708, every object which they had originally proposed to themselves might have been secured. Holland might have carved for herself a very respectable barrier out of the Netherlands. The Emperor might easily have obtained for himself those parts of Italy which it had been stipulated he should have. And how thoroughly the motives which actuated England in the beginning had vanished! Nothing could be more evident than that no further trouble on the score of France was to be apprehended for a generation to come. The oppressor of Europe, sensible that his resources were exhausted, was suing humbly for peace,

and was willing to purchase it by the most degrading sacrifices. And peace would undoubtedly have been concluded at this time, had not a new design been imported into the confederacy. In an evil hour it had been determined to drive Philip out of Spain and to place his crown on the head of Charles. The difficulty of the enterprise was apparent from the outset; and the impracticability, to say nothing of the iniquity of forcing a whole nation to submit to a sovereign, who would in his person represent foreign domination, should have been obvious to every reasonable man. But Whigs, Dutch, Imperialists, were all blinded by arrogance, and seem to have thought themselves omnipotent. It is simply true that the rupture of the conferences was hailed by the ruling party of this country with a species of grim satisfaction. They thought that they had the ancient enemy of England, the arch troubler of the peace of Europe, absolutely at their mercy. The remembrance of what France had been, the dread of what she might again become, steeled their hearts against compassion. To persevere with the chastisement until she had been reduced to the level of a second-rate monarchy, seems to have been at this period the aspiration of the Whigs. It never entered the minds of such lofty statesmen to turn the King's situation to account by extorting any special advantages for England. They scarcely vouchsafed to take any part in the negotiations, but abandoned them to the Dutch, well knowing that it was the interest of that nation even more than their own to screw France down to the lowest possible point in the political scale. One requirement they did indeed make. They asked for the demolition of the fortifications and harbour of Dunkirk, from which in time of war issued most of the privateers that preyed on English commerce. On this subject public feeling was too strong to be altogether ignored. Yet they evinced no great signs of indignation when the Dutch had the impudence to object to this single concession being made to English interests. On the contrary, they were ready to acquiesce in any scheme for the aggrandizement of a people who were already formidable competitors with their own countrymen for the trade of the world. All their thoughts were concentred on the one object of keeping the coalition firmly cemented together. Their contempt of money scarcely

knew bounds. It was sufficient for an ally to raise the cry of poverty for England to declare her willingness to relieve him of a share of his financial burdens. All the shortcomings of the Emperor, his shuffling excuses for not fulfilling his compacts, his continual diversion of his troops to purposes foreign from the general cause, could not provoke the Whigs to utter more than a faint remonstrance. It is something wonderful to read how, in order to keep the Allies in good humour, our Ministers at the height of their power could submit to be bullied by the Dutch, to be tricked by the Emperor, and to be swindled out of subsidies by every miserable little potentate who offered to bring a few thousand half-naked and half-starved rascals into the field.

It is useless to speculate upon what might have happened had Anne continued her favour to Marlborough and the Whigs. It is usual to attribute the deliverance of France to the High Church proclivities of the Queen and her preference of one waiting-woman over another. But there are many indications that the great bulk of the people was growing weary of the war. With the fall of the Whigs in 1710 the whole system of conquest and glory fell to the ground. Oxford and his colleagues, dismayed by the difficulties they found to raise money, soon determined to make peace, if possible in conjunction with the Allies, but without them if they proved obstinate and unmanageable. To save their treaty from becoming unpopular, to protect themselves against the clamour which disappointed Dutchmen and Imperialists would be certain to raise, they endeavoured to procure very favourable terms for their own country. They at once abandoned Spain to Philip, and thought that, after making this immense concession, Louis would have been too overjoyed to haggle about points of trade. But they chose to disarm without any further security for the future than the King's bare word. He broke loose from the chains which they had relaxed, and after a favourable campaign was able to treat with all his opponents on terms of equality. One important point the English Ministers had indeed secured, the possession of Dunkirk. But to obtain the rest of those concessions which his Majesty had promised they could rely only on his sense of honour and gratitude. In general, it must be said to his credit,

he was disposed to keep faith with England. Yet every trifle, trifle as he would have deemed it two years back, was carefully weighed, and when granted, was often granted with reservations. Looking at all the circumstances, the wonder is, not that the terms which the Allies succeeded in obtaining were not better, but that they were so good.

The treaty of commerce between Great Britain and France it will be convenient to reserve for examination. The main points in the treaty of peace between the two countries were the acceptance by the French king of the plan of succession to the crown of Great Britain marked out by the act of settlement, and an engagement to afford no aid, direct or indirect, to any parties who should oppose that plan. He also agreed to destroy the harbour and fortifications of Dunkirk as soon as he received an equivalent, and to concede or restore to Great Britain the Hudson bay territories, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland.

The terms accorded to the Dutch were of course below what had once been their aspiration; yet they were more favourable than they could have hoped to obtain at the commencement of the war. They had indeed to restore Lille, Bethune, Aire and St. Venant; but they were permitted to retain garrisons in all the other towns of the Spanish Netherlands; and Luxemburg, Charleroi, Namur and Nieuport were added to their barrier. It had been arranged between the kings of France and Spain that the sovereignty of the Netherlands should be transferred to the Emperor.

Savoy emerged from the war a gainer by two little fortresses in the Alps which the Duke insisted were necessary to him as a barrier against France. The King of Portugal was sufficiently rewarded for the doubtful assistance he had afforded the coalition by Louis consenting to abandon some claims he was fond of urging in the Brazils. The King of Prussia had joined in the war apparently for no better reason than to lend out to good paymasters an army which was eating the bread of idleness. Cause against France he had none, unless indeed he may be considered as participating in the cause which was common to every European Power, the expediency of imposing some check upon the ambition of the French king. He died while the negotiations were proceeding at Utrecht; and his son, the eccentric

father of the great Frederic, succeeded him. Louis now condescended to recognize the crown of this last new member of the fraternity of kings, and permitted him to exchange his principality of Orange, which lay in the heart of France, for a principality in Guelderland which he had a much better chance of enjoying in peace.*

Such then were the ostensible results of eleven years of hard fighting. With respect to Louis he had lost four pitched battles; yet the treaties he made showed but faint traces of his discomfiture. Not a single province, not a single town of importance had been wrested from the ancient dominions of the House of Bourbon. Nay, the King retained his grasp upon those cities and provinces which in former years he had filched from the Empire and Spain, and upon the very prize which had occasioned the war. The throne of his grandson was now secure; and according to the Whigs the influence of the French sovereign was paramount from Lille to Cadiz. Whatever internal injuries, therefore, France may have sustained during the conflict, she showed not a scar to the world.

England obtained, in exchange for many thousands of her bravest sons and for at least sixty millions of money, a vast territory in North America, a region of almost perpetual ice and snow, and capable only of affording a living to a few fishermen and fur-hunters. Yet it would be unfair to estimate the results of a war by a strict debtor and creditor account. Before she entered upon the contest she was agitated by a fear that Louis might, in his overweening arrogance, employ his armies to seat a Roman Catholic prince upon her throne. Her feelings had also been outraged by a gross insult. From that fear she was now delivered: that insult she had wiped out with an ocean of blood. But she had done more. She had impressed upon the mind of Louis a lesson which it was not likely that either he or his successors would forget for some time to come. It is the misfortune of mankind that wars should spring so frequently from the ambition of one selfish and inconsiderate despot. Again and again has it become necessary for a hundred thousand men in arms to teach those principles of justice

* All these treaties are given in English in the "State of Europe for 1713," and in French in the Lettres Historiques and Lamberty.

and moderation which the schoolmaster has neglected to instil. The mournful history is continually repeating itself. Civilization may polish the exterior, but seems incapable of changing the heart. In truth, it is so manifest that war is the condition of life which the Creator has prescribed for his creatures, that it may be doubted whether the poet, historian, or philosopher who attempts to inculcate the superior advantages of peace, is not guilty of presumption and impiety.

During the first three months of the year 1713 the anxiety of the commercial community was kept at a high tension. It was known that a new treaty of commerce was being arranged by the Ministers of France and England, which could not fail to affect the prices of a number of commodities; but its conditions remained an absolute secret. The protected manufacturers were of course the first to take the alarm, and deputation after deputation repaired to the Ministers to warn them of the danger of making any alterations in the existing duties upon French merchandize. It was expected that the first beams of enlightenment would fall upon the nation when the Parliament met; but January, February, and March brought nothing but disappointing prorogations. The gloomiest rumours were naturally in circulation to account for the delay. The King wanted to break faith with the Ministers; the Dutch and Imperialists stood out so resolutely that the English plenipotentiaries could do nothing; and Marlborough and the Whigs were encouraging them in their obstinacy by assurances that, at the next elections to be held in a few months, the Tories and their infamous negotiations would be nowhere. The Whig pamphleteers and ballad-makers were very provoking, and drove a roaring trade: for the new stamp duty, which had crushed the elegant and moral *Spectator*, had totally failed, by raising the price of literature generally, to diminish the public appetite for coarse and virulent attacks upon prominent men. There was much mysterious fermenting among the Jacobites. Indeed, the accounts which came from Scotland were so bad as to alarm greatly the zealous Protestants of the south. A third part of the clergy had refused to take the oath of abjuration, and the Pretender's birthday was celebrated in many towns. Meanwhile the writers in London who advocated the cause of James were as ready as

the Whig hirelings to take advantage of the careless good nature of the Ministers, who usually treated scribblers of all shades of political opinion with a philosophical indifference which was not comprehended by that generation. Venomous little tracts were constantly issuing from the press, and had perhaps none the less circulation because it was a crime to read them. In January there appeared in the *Postboy* a document which startled the whole town. It was an address to the Queen purporting to proceed from the burgesses and principal inhabitants of Edinburgh, and which, after an ostentatious parade of the Tory doctrines about non-resistance, concluded with a prayer that her Majesty might live to be the restorer of hereditary right, the avenger of injustice, and the protectress of orphans. All connection with this address was promptly repudiated by the mayor and sheriffs of Edinburgh; but a genuine address from the city of Perth, soon afterwards presented to the Queen, was couched in terms scarcely less significant of the wishes of the subscribers.*

On the afternoon of Good Friday, the 3rd of April (Old Style), the treaty of peace arrived in London. The good news was communicated to the public by the voice of the cannon, and the evening of that anniversary upon which Christians deplore a death indispensable to their salvation, was enlivened by a general illumination.

Peace was accomplished; but one important question remained. Would the terms upon which it was made be found satisfactory by the Parliament and the nation? The last prorogation had assigned the 9th of April for the meeting of the Houses, and upon that day the members assembled. The health of the Queen had been visibly declining for upwards of a year past. Her attacks of gout had been increasingly frequent and severe. She had grown corpulent, and found herself unequal to taking exercise. But that strong desire to perform her duty which was her most amiable characteristic, impelled her to go through a fatiguing ceremony in the hope that her presence would be a support and protection to her Ministers in the difficult and even perilous business which lay before them. She was borne in a chair to the House of Peers, and read with

* Lettres Historiques; Bolingbroke's Correspondence.

a weak voice a speech to which the Parliament listened with the profoundest attention. The delay in opening the session, she informed the Houses, had arisen from her anxiety to be able to communicate to them at their first meeting the intelligence that the negotiations at Utrecht had been brought to a successful termination. The treaty was now signed, and in a few days the ratifications would be exchanged. The efforts she had made for securing the Protestant succession, and the spectacle of the perfect friendship which existed between her and the House of Hanover, must, she thought, convince all persons who really desired the safety and tranquillity of the country, of the uselessness of attempting to separate the interests of the two.

As regarded the public expenditure she informed the Commons that as much progress had been made in reducing it as the position of affairs admitted. What force it would henceforth be necessary to keep on foot she would leave entirely to the Parliament to arrange. "Make yourselves safe," she said, "and I shall be satisfied. I require no other protection than the loyalty and affection of my people." Some recommendations followed to encourage trade. There was a strongly worded intimation of her displeasure "at the unparalleled licentiousness in publishing libels which blasphemed everything sacred, and propagated opinions tending to the overthrow of all religion and government." Prosecutions had been ordered; but some new law was required to put a stop to this growing evil. It was also necessary to devise some remedy against the impious practice of duelling. The speech concluded, as usual, with an exhortation to unanimity. "Now that we are entering upon peace abroad, let me conjure you all to use your utmost endeavours to calm men's minds at home, that the arts of peace may be cultivated. Let not groundless jealousies, contrived by a faction and fomented by party rage, effect that which our foreign enemies could not manage."*

The speech was somewhat disappointing to all parties. It might be gratifying to the Tories to learn that peace was actually concluded, and to the Whigs that measures had been taken for securing the Protestant succession. But there was

* Parliamentary History.

not a word of intelligence either about the terms of the peace or the nature of the measures. In their address of thanks, therefore, the Lords contented themselves simply with congratulating her Majesty upon the success of her endeavours. The Whigs proposed as an amendment that the Queen should be requested to submit the treaties of peace and commerce to the House. But the indelicacy of pressing her upon this point seems to have been felt by many members of the party, and the amendment was negatived by seventy-four against forty-three. In the Commons a similar clause was offered, but found so little support that it was withdrawn.

The Ministers, in fact, were firmly determined that, until the ratifications had been exchanged and the peace was beyond the power of the Opposition to overturn, there should be no debate upon the subject. Meanwhile the Commons were entertained by a report from the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the application of the public revenues. The main purpose of this document seems to have been to inflame the public against the previous rulers of the country, and to excite a desire of peace by drawing attention to the enormous cost of war. But the statements as to the abuses which, during the period the Whigs were in power, had prevailed in all departments of the service were never contradicted, and it is impossible to read them at the present day without a thrill of horror at the sty of corruption they reveal. It appears to have been the universal practice of generals to muster their troops always as complete, and to draw the pay of men long since dead or discharged without accounting for it in any way except by their bare assertion that it was employed in obtaining recruits. The total absence of all control over the highest officials of the State was equally conspicuous in the case of the obscurer servants of the public. Everything was carried on by bribery and fraud. Commissaries took perquisites from rascally clothiers, and the soldiers and sailors were cheated out of their necessary apparel: from victuallers, who defrauded the men of their hardly-earned meals; and from brewers, who not only did not send the quantity of beer they were paid for, but supplied such filthy stuff that the poor fellows rejected it with loathing. Even in the management of hospitals, the atrocious

system was in full vigour. The surgeons and physicians swore that the meat supplied to those in Spain was carrion, and the other provisions generally so unsound as to occasion a constant mortality. The director allowed but fivepence a day to each convalescent to provide for himself, and charged two shillings and sixpence to the Government. But the diversion of Chelsea College and its funds from the purpose for which they were established called forth the strongest animadversion from the Commissioners. The building had been erected for the special object of affording an asylum to sick, maimed, and superannuated soldiers; but of late years a crowd of functionaries, governors, and deputy-governors, deputy-paymasters and officers of the house had managed to quarter their own servants, clerks and coachmen, wholly unconnected with the army, upon the charity. So notorious had become the laxity, or more probably the roguery, of the Governor that in 1709 one Francis Core, a messenger at the War Office, who doubtless acted as agent for persons in higher position, gave out publicly that he would get any man admitted as a pensioner for money. He was speedily surrounded by numbers of poor people, decayed butchers and bakers, tailors, and alehouse keepers, each with his little bribe in his hand. From one man he got six guineas, from another ten, from another eleven guineas. Yet the applicants, when admitted, scarcely found existence within the walls of the college as charming as they had anticipated. For the system of bribery by which they had obtained entrance was now retaliated upon them. The tradesmen who contracted to supply the institution with beef and beer paid perquisites to the Governor for their privilege, and of course recouped themselves in the quantity and quality of the provisions they supplied.*

This long catalogue of abuses was read to the House by William Shippen, one of the Commissioners: yet it led to no effectual measures being taken to suppress those abuses. The indignation of the audience, as far as any record remains, was far less than comparatively trifling delinquencies in public servants would excite in our days. The report probably set forth little more than what every member already suspected or

* The report is printed in the Parliamentary History.

even knew to be the case. In truth, the standard of morality was everywhere so low, corruption was so universal and notorious, that people had grown accustomed to regard honesty in official men as an impossible virtue, and thought that it was perfectly natural for a gentleman in a position of trust and authority to turn his advantages to profit. There was not a member of the House who might not one day become a governor, a commissary, or something else that would enable him in his turn to pillage the public. Of what use, then, was it to attack a system which might eventually help him to a fortune?

But if the Parliament could not be moved by considerations of the public welfare, it was quick to respond to the spiteful promptings of party spirit. On the 1st of May an order passed the Commons that Doctor Sacheverell should be desired to preach before them on the 29th, the anniversary of the Restoration. The three years of his suspension from ecclesiastical functions had recently expired. The day of his liberation had been celebrated by great rejoicings; and he had resumed the office of preaching by a sermon which he delivered at St. Saviour's Church. His text was one of audacious impudence:—"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." A hundred pounds, a sum which, as the earnings of literary labour, moved the envy of Swift, was at once paid down by an enterprising bookseller for the privilege of printing this precious discourse, and thirty thousand copies were soon circulating throughout the kingdom, and impressing pious souls with the resemblance between the sufferings of Sacheverell and those of the Redeemer of mankind.* It may be asserted with little fear of doing any injustice that, in the eyes of the great majority of the population of this island, King Charles I. and Sacheverell were for many years blended with Christ in a co-equal Trinity.

At length the ratifications of the treaties had been exchanged between France and England. Peace was proclaimed in London on the 5th of May, eleven years and a day after the proclamation of war, amid the joyful shouts of the populace. The

* Swift's Journal to Stella. He says, "I believe the bookseller will be confoundedly bit, and will not sell one half." But Swift was mistaken.

festivities were kept up with much spirit. The guns of the Tower and the parks were answered by salvoes from the craft which covered the river from the bridge to Gravesend, and the discharges were continued until far into the next morning. At night the metropolis was enlivened by bonfires and fireworks in the squares and open places, and by an illumination of the houses. The windows of some sturdy Whigs presented an exception to the general blaze of light, and were promptly smashed by the rabble. During the next week the glaziers must have been busily employed, for the damage inflicted on this night was computed at two thousand pounds.*

Four days after the proclamation, the treaties of peace and commerce were submitted to the Parliament with a somewhat haughty message from the Queen, importing that, as it was the undoubted prerogative of the Crown to make peace and war, she had already ratified them. The 14th of May was appointed by the Commons for taking into consideration the eighth and ninth articles of the treaty of commerce, which required the support of some legislation to carry into effect.

By the eighth article it was agreed that the subjects of the Queen and of the French king should be placed on the same footing, as regarded the duties payable on merchandize, with the most favoured nations; and in pursuance of this agreement the ninth article stipulated that, within two months after a law had been passed in England to reduce the high duties which virtually excluded French produce from English markets to a rate proportioned to the duties leviable on English produce imported into France, the King would re-establish the general tariff enacted in 1664, and Commissioners should meet in London to adjust any further difficulties which might remain. In a word, there was to be free-trade between England and France. The English merchant was to be at liberty to send his native woollen manufactures, the sugar and tobacco of his colonies into France; the French merchant to send his wines and his silks into England at moderate and nicely-proportioned rates of duty. To the man of business of our day the principle sought to be established by this treaty will probably seem unimpeachable. He has during the last fifty years seen his

* Lettres Historiques; State of Europe.

country thriving more and more wonderfully after every assault upon the system of monopolies, restrictions, and undue encouragement afforded by well-intentioned, but not sufficiently enlightened, statesmen to particular branches of trade. To him protection is a mistake now demonstrated so fully that even the most bigoted Tory would be ashamed to recur to it. Commerce evidently fares best when governments abstain from meddling with it, as those men are healthiest who resort least to drugs and stimulants for artificial strength. Industry and ingenuity, virtues possessed by most Englishmen, are the only sources of wealth. Nothing seems more evident than that, if an equal scale of duties were adopted by all the Governments of the world, the advantage would fall to those nations which were most industrious. England, therefore, with her teeming and hard-working population, need fear no competition.

But very different views on the subject of commerce prevailed in the time of Queen Anne. The protection system flourished in all its glory. There was an East India Company, a South Sea Company, a Levant Company, a Russia Company, each possessing a monopoly of trade to certain parts of the globe. The jealousy, moreover, with which the growing power of France was regarded, had impelled our Parliament to extend protection to a number of manufactures which, under their fostering care, had taken root in the island, as of brandy, silk, linen, and paper, in the hope that native industry would supply the wants of the country. The necessity for protection was obvious. As to the first article, brandy, the superiority of the French production was undeniable. In the other instances the English manufactures perhaps had the advantage in point of quality. English silks and Irish linens continued far into the eighteenth century to be preferred in every market. But it was justly remarked that the cheapness with which all manufactured articles could be produced in France would enable French proprietors to sell at prices far below those which could be remunerative to English proprietors. An English workman, who firmly believed that his health and strength required the support of two or three pounds of good beef and a gallon of beer daily, could not be put off with the wages which would satisfy a Frenchman who lived on cabbage, and was content to

carouse on a bottle of light wine which cost him three sous. A series of acts had therefore been passed for the purpose of excluding all foreign merchandize which could come into competition with our own manufactures from our markets. Without the protection afforded by these acts it was considered impossible that several manufactures could continue to exist. With such protection, however, they flourished, kept in employment a multitude of poor people, and, as it was supposed, saved the country immense sums annually which would otherwise have gone into the pockets of the French.

Such being the established order of things, and such the doctrines held by all the leading merchants of the day, it is easy to realize the storm of indignation which arose in the City, the thrill of alarm which ran through manufacturing centres when it became known that the Ministers were about to ask for a law demolishing all the imagined safeguards of British industry. To most of the commercial men of that day the treaty of commerce admitted but of two explanations. Either the Ministers were grossly ignorant of the principles of trade, or they were traitors and had sold their country. If, it was said, the French had beaten us as often as we had beaten them, such conditions would be thought hard. Yet little doubt can now remain that Bolingbroke, in arranging this treaty, considered that he was promoting the best interests not only of his own nation but of mankind. He thought that a free interchange of commodities would be a source of wealth and comfort to both kingdoms, that it would unite them by the bonds of mutual interest, and would gradually eradicate those pernicious impulses to war which the Whigs had implanted in his countrymen and which they loved to foster. But such liberal and comprehensive speculations were altogether in advance of the age; nor is it possible to acquit Bolingbroke of misconduct in one particular. He chose to negotiate a treaty of the last importance to the country without consulting any persons who were practically acquainted with commerce. It is true that most of the principal merchants of the City were Whigs. But there remained not a few men of business who were well affected to the Government, and fully qualified to advise a Minister of the feelings and doctrines of the commercial community. The only individual

to whom he appears to have resorted for counsel was Arthur Moore, a self-made man, who had risen from the humble station of a footman to a seat in Parliament, and to be a Commissioner of trade.

Notwithstanding the growing clamour, however, the Ministers were not without strong hopes of obtaining the legislation they required. The great majority of the members of the Lower House, although somewhat less firm than formerly in their allegiance, were still indisposed to desert them. In the first debate they were victorious. Leave was obtained to bring in a bill to make effectual the eighth and ninth articles of the treaty. An interval of nearly a month then elapsed, during which the Houses were engaged upon another question which threatened to rend the kingdom to pieces. Meanwhile the treaty was published, and its contents were devoured by thousands of eager readers. A fierce literary warfare sprang up. Defoe, who when the advocacy of free trade was concerned, scarcely needed rousing, started a periodical with all the statistical aid which the officials of the Treasury and the Custom House could afford him. An opposition paper was at once got up by a combination of Whig talent to demonstrate that by free trade with France the country would lose a million and a half yearly, that our manufactures would be ruined and hundreds of thousands of hard-working persons turned out to beg their bread, that paupers would become so numerous that half the incomes of our rich men would go in poor rates, and that the kingdom would be given over to riots, insurrections, the Pretender, the Pope, and the Devil. The honest squires, who formed the chief support of the Ministers, were told that as the country grew poorer, rents would fall and land diminish in value. There were but two classes of persons who could find their advantage in such a treaty. Epicures would enjoy at a reasonable price the delicious wines of France, and fine ladies would be able to clothe themselves in cheaper silks. The success of these arguments was complete. Before long the nation was in one of its wild fits of panic. Petitions to the Parliament against adopting the treaty of commerce came up from all parts of the country, from towns which but a few weeks back, upon the announcement of peace, had come addresses of congratulation and loyalty. Tory

members were besieged by deputations of angry constituents, who warned them that, if they voted in favour of the bill, their chance of a seat in the next Parliament would be a poor one. Upon the 9th of June, when the House of Commons resolved itself into a grand committee to consider the bill, there was a crowd of representatives from commercial corporations at the door clamouring to be heard against the principle of free trade with France.

The debates, partly owing to the number of merchants who were admitted to address the House, and partly to the frequent interludes of skirmishing which occurred between the friends of the Government and their opponents, extended over a period of nine days. In spite of all the logic of the city appearances portended the triumph of the Ministers. Clause by clause the construction of the dreaded bill proceeded. The French Ambassador collected materials for a gigantic bonfire before his house, and kept a messenger constantly in readiness to bear the joyful news of the passing of the bill to his court. On the 18th of June it was moved that the bill be engrossed; and a debate ensued which lasted from three in the afternoon until eleven at night. Arthur Moore argued with much pertinacity in favour of the treaty. He was undoubtedly a man of great abilities; but the deficiencies of his education had prevented his attaining oratorical excellence, and his efforts appear to have done more harm than good to his cause. On the other side were men possessing great influence over the House, the impetuous Stanhope, the subtle Lechmere, the energetic and learned King. But the speech which told with decisive weight was delivered by a Tory. Sir Thomas Hanmer was a wealthy baronet, one of the leaders of his party and the personal friend of Oxford and Bolingbroke. He had even been admitted to some share in the negotiations with France. He now, to the surprise and delight of the Whigs, expressed himself to be against the treaty of commerce. At the time, he said, when he voted for bringing in the bill for rendering effectual the eighth and ninth articles, he had not given sufficient consideration to the subject. But he had since maturely weighed the representations of the merchants and manufacturers, and was now convinced that the passing of such a bill would be of great

prejudice to the woollen and silk manufactures of the kingdom, that it would increase the number of paupers, and eventually affect the value of land. He had formed his conclusions in perfect independence. He was determined not to be led blindly by any Ministry. He was not biassed by that fear which might work with other members of losing his seat. Hanmer's example appears to have encouraged many waverers to take the same course. Two placemen had the courage to speak against the bill. On a division it was thrown out by a majority of nine. A hundred and eighty-five members voted that it should pass; a hundred and ninety-four were for rejecting it.*

To so small a majority did the protection system owe the prolongation of its reign. The defection of only five Tories from the Government side prevented the country from trying the experiment of a free trade with France. It is interesting to speculate upon what might have been the result of such an experiment. In 1786, when a commercial treaty was concluded with France on a similar basis, the advantages proved so strong in our favour as to set the French for upwards of half a century against any renewal of free trade with Great Britain. Yet it by no means follows that, because the advantages were in our favour in 1786, they would have been so in 1713. At that period our manufacturers were engaged to a most unfortunate extent in producing just such articles as the French could produce better or cheaper than they. English silks, linen, and paper, then engaging an undue proportion of labour, must have withered under competition. But by 1786 the manufacturing system of the country had undergone a great change. The production of woollen goods had trebled, while the inventions of Arkwright and Hargreaves enabled our exporters to stock the markets of the whole world with cotton manufactures which defied all competition either in quality or cheapness. The value of our extensive coal-fields was becoming properly appreciated. Hardware and glass, articles of second-rate commercial importance in the time of Anne, had greatly improved. Upon those things, on the other hand, in which the French, favoured by soil or climate, could surpass or, at least, undersell

* Parliamentary History; Lettres Historiques; Burnet and Notes; Bolingbroke to Strafford, June 20, July 1.

us, we had learned to place no reliance. These considerations force us to conclude that, although the Whigs in the time of Pitt were right in advocating free trade, the same party was equally right in the time of Walpole in adhering to protection. Indeed we can hardly doubt that, if the treaty of commerce had been adopted in 1713, it would have been followed by a period of great national distress.

In this instance, therefore, the Whigs may be considered to have rendered an essential service to their country. But the historian who reflects how things were managed by the men of this generation will be careful how he launches out into eulogy. Almost every measure was dictated by party spirit, and was good or mischievous by sheer accident. There would be little uncharitableness in assuming that the Whigs would have exerted all their endeavours to procure the rejection of the best possible treaty that could be framed by Tory Ministers. While the fate of this bill was pending they were engaged in what has been properly stigmatised as one of the most disgusting episodes in the history of faction. For no other imaginable cause than to worry and embarrass the Government the leaders of the party joined with the discontented Scotch peers in an attempt to repeal the Union.

Since the passing of the act there had been no legislation to affect the body of the Scottish people except a highly necessary statute extending the English law of treason to the entire island. But the nobility had been disappointed and provoked by that resolution of the Upper House which took from the peers of Scotland all hope of becoming peers of Great Britain. The passing of that resolution had been followed by the sixteen representatives withdrawing in a body from the House; and it was not without great difficulty that they were prevailed upon to return. Their mortification was indeed severe. Not unlikely every nobleman who had come up from his native country had cherished a hope that, before his term of three years was expired, the right to sit in the national assembly would have been assured to him for ever, that he would have taken rank as a peer of Great Britain with the families of Howard and Cavendish. The Scottish representatives in the Lower House were not less inclined to resent what they regarded as an insult to

their nation. A year had rolled away since the Southron had afforded this instance of his treachery and malignancy; and now came further proof of his determination to oppress and ruin the unhappy country which, beguiled by his gold and his promises, had thrown herself into his arms. It had been provided at the Union that no tax should be laid on malt in Scotland so long as the war lasted. The Scottish commissioners who stipulated for this exemption obviously acted under the impression that, as soon as the war was over, the heavy duty of sixpence a bushel which was then levied in England would be reduced. Peace with France had now been proclaimed; peace with Spain was all but concluded. The Parliament thought itself, therefore, at liberty to commence taxing Scotland. But the finances were not in a satisfactory condition; there were heavy debts to clear off; and it was in consequence judged inexpedient to reduce at present the duty on malt. In spite of the remonstrances of the Scottish Members the Commons passed a bill extending this duty to Scotland.

The measure undoubtedly wears at first sight an appearance of harshness and injustice. The average price of a bushel of malt in England was twenty-seven pence. Scotch malt was of very inferior quality, and a bushel fetched, in a country where the poverty of the inhabitants kept all prices low, not more than ninepence. The consequence, therefore, of imposing an equal duty in both countries would be that while an Englishman would obtain his beer at an advance of only a fourth upon what it would be if there were no tax on malt, the Scotchman would have to pay nearly double the price to which he had been accustomed. The Scottish members tried hard to get the duty reduced to threepence for their country, and their arguments prevailed in committee. But when the matter was brought before the House some members from the northern counties of England and from Wales, where the grain was little superior to that of Scotland, importuned for similar favour. It was then decided to restore the bill to its original state In truth, a reduction could not have been allowed to Scotland without provoking much discontent and charges of unfairness from many districts of South Britain.

This failure completed the exasperation of the Scotch, and

the members of both Houses held a meeting to consider what course they should adopt. George Lockhart took a prominent share in the proceedings. Since the frustration of his intrigues to prevent the Union he had served in two Parliaments, and had achieved some distinction as an industrious member of committees. The acumen he had latterly displayed in ferreting out matter of accusation against the Whigs, and the malignity of style which characterised every report with which he had anything to do, made him valuable to the Tories and the Ministers. It was still the leading wish of his heart to procure the repeal of the Union; for Scotland in the power of a Government that either was, or was at least forced to appear to be, in favour of the Hanoverian succession, interfered greatly with the plans of the Jacobites. He now descanted upon the evils which had already accrued from the Union, and insisted that they would never cease to recur so long as Scotland submitted to be absorbed by a richer and stronger power. Argyle and the Earl of Mar, a Jacobite of rising influence, declared themselves to be of the same opinion. The former expressed himself as being much dissatisfied with the results of the Union, and said that he had become so fully convinced that it was destructive to the interests of both kingdoms that he was now as desirous of repealing as he had formerly been of promoting it. Some faint traces exist that the wisdom of this course was not recognised by the entire Assembly. But resentment against England burned in every breast, and at such a moment the voice of so great a chieftain as Argyle almost precluded opposition. It was decided to endeavour to get the Union repealed. Argyle, Mar, Lockhart, and another member named Cockburn were appointed a deputation to wait on the Queen and acquaint her with the decision. Anne was much disquieted by the announcement. It was a precipitate resolution, she said. She hoped they would not have reason to repent of it. She would, she added, do her best to make things easy for her Scottish subjects, words which were naturally interpreted as a promise that the malt tax, although granted by the Parliament, should not be collected.*

The Scots were not, however, to be deterred from their

* Lockhart's Memoirs; Burnet; Lettres Historiques.

design because one grievance might be in a manner redressed; and the Whigs of the Upper House soon announced their determination to support them. Somers, although reduced by illness to the shadow of his former self, undertook to organize his party for the demolition of that great and noble work which his exertions in a happier frame of mind had so greatly contributed to rear. A meeting of the Whig chiefs was held at his house. The once majestic orator, the wise legislator, the learned and upright judge, seemed inspired with new strength by the animosity he bore to a Tory ministry. This last effort of his genius proved but too successful. The meeting broke up firmly resolved to support the Scots in their mischievous project.

Upon the 1st of June, Seafield, who had now become Earl of Finlater, moved for leave to bring in a bill to dissolve the Union. The measure, he observed, had not produced the good effects which had been anticipated from it. The grievances of which the Scottish nation complained might be reduced under four heads,—their being deprived of a privy council, their being subjected to the English law of treason, the resolution which rendered their peers incapable of being made peers of Great Britain, and the recent determination of the Commons to extend the Malt Tax to their country. The motion was seconded by Mar, and was supported by Argyle with that soldierlike energy which characterized him. To lay an equal imposition upon malt in Scotland and malt in England was, he declared; as unjust as to subject every description of land to an equal tax. In the neighbourhood of London it might be worth five or six pounds an acre; but there were counties in which it would not fetch so many shillings. If the Malt Tax, he added, were insisted on, it would be necessary to quarter a regiment of dragoons in the country to collect it. More than one Scottish peer remarked that the Union, so far from having led to a good understanding between the two nations, had but increased their animosities. Sunderland, Townshend, and Halifax all declared their willingness to dissolve the Union, if some means could be devised to secure the Protestant succession. Upon the Tories, who had opposed the measure in 1707, was thrown the burden of defending the work of their rivals. Peterborough, in a lively speech, compared the Union to a marriage. The husband, he said, might sometimes act unkindly to the lady; but that was

no ground for her suing for a divorce, especially if she had mended her fortune by the match. A grave Scotch lord reminded the witty Earl that the indissolubility of marriage arose from the divine sanction it received. "I do not see," retorted Peterborough, "how the Union could have been concluded with more solemnity than it was, unless it had come down, like the ten commandments, from heaven." "The Scotch are a people," he said at another time, "who never will be satisfied. They want all the advantages of union without paying anything for them." Oxford professed himself at a loss to understand by what legal power the Union could now be dissolved. It had been enacted by two distinct Parliaments, one of which was no longer in being. Nottingham, who now spoke and voted on all occasions with the Whigs, and who in supporting the repeal of a measure which he had formerly opposed, was one of the few English peers who were not acting with ridiculous inconsistency, replied to this quibble by averring that the powers of both Parliaments had descended to the present consolidated Parliament. Between Sunderland and Oxford there was a sharp interchange of personalities. The Treasurer, to appease the Scotch, dropped a hint that although the Malt Tax might be granted by Parliament, it might be afterwards remitted by the Crown. "It is a strange thing," sneered Sunderland, "to hear from the noble lord expressions which tend to establish a despotic dispensing power and arbitrary government." "My family," returned Oxford, unusually nettled by this remark, "never did what was done by others. They were never the promoters and advisers of arbitrary measures." This reference to the wicked Minister of James II. almost drove Sunderland mad. He sprang to his feet, and poured forth an energetic vindication of his parent for acts perpetrated in days when "the other lord's family had not yet been heard of."

The House divided, and the Whigs were eventually saved in their own despite from the discredit which the introduction of a bill to dissolve the Union would have brought upon them. But their escape was a narrow one. Fifty-four peers voted in support of the motion, and an equal number against it. Proxies were then counted, and it appeared that there were but thirteen for the affirmative, while seventeen were for the negative.*

* Parliamentary History; Lettres Historiques; Burnet.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE Whigs might well apprehend that their factious attempt to procure the repeal of the Union had not much raised them in general estimation. The triennial Parliament drew to its close; a general election was at hand, and it was important to do something which would bring back popular sympathy to their side. It was determined to fetch up lost ground by a fresh display of zeal for the Protestant succession. Wharton moved an address to the Queen praying her to use her most pressing instances with the Duke of Lorraine to expel the Pretender from his dominions, and with all other princes and states in amity with her to refuse the same person entrance to territory subject to their control. The Peers assented to the address without opposition, though it appears to have given pain to some members of the House, who assuredly were not Jacobites. Where, it was very pertinently asked, was the Pretender to live? There was not a country in Europe which was not now on friendly terms with her Majesty. If the various sovereigns chose to pay no attention to the request, how was it possible to enforce their obedience? If they complied, whither was the unfortunate young man to betake himself?* Peterborough, to a pathetic harangue upon this subject from Lord North and Grey, replied with unfeeling levity that, as the Pretender had commenced his studies at Paris, he might just as well go and finish them at Rome.

The address was presented, and a response which should have been deemed satisfactory was returned; but it was not unmingled with a kind but significant reproof. Anne promised the House that she would repeat her instances for the

* There is no record that Lord North and Grey, who made these sensible and humane remarks, was mixed up in any way with the party of the Pretender.

removal of the person named. "I think, however," she added, "you will agree with me that, if we could cure our animosities and divisions at home, it would be the most effectual method to secure the Protestant succession." The Whigs would not have suffered in the eyes of posterity, had they shown some sense of a reprimand so gentle and good-tempered. No recent action either on the part of the Pretender or his sympathisers afforded them the slightest pretext for persecution. The treaty by which the King of France had just bound himself to stand aloof from all schemes for a restoration had destroyed the best hopes of the Stuarts. The family had withdrawn into the Duchy of Lorraine, and were living in strict retirement; nor did their partisans, either in Scotland or England, show any proofs of being better organised than formerly.

Far from being abashed, however, by the royal answer, the Whigs chose to cavil with it. Her Majesty had declared she would repeat her instances to the Court of Lorraine. It was a new thing to hear that any instances had yet been made. A second address to express the surprise of the Peers that such instances had not been made with effect was thereupon moved by Sunderland, seconded by Nottingham, and carried after a trifling opposition. Anne appears to have acknowledged it only in general terms. The Whigs of the Lower House acted in concert with their party in the Upper. Their address was moved by Stanhope, and was carried, after a sarcastic comment had been passed upon it by Sir William Whitelocke, an old Cavalier of eighty years, who sat with Bromley for Oxford University. He remembered, he said, an address being carried up to the Protector to procure the expulsion of Charles Stuart from France only a short time before that Prince was invited back to the throne of his ancestors.

A short time before these addresses were carried a message from the Queen to the House of Commons had given rise to much conjecture. Her Majesty asked for power to borrow, on the security of the funds set apart for the Civil List, such a sum as would be sufficient to discharge liabilities that had accumulated upon her to a heavy amount. The announcement that the Queen was in debt seems to have taken most of the members by surprise. The allowance for the Civil List was six

hundred thousand a year; and this income Anne, soon after the commencement of her reign, judged to be so far in excess of her probable expenses that she directed that a hundred thousand a year should be devoted towards the cost of the war. According to a statement, however, now made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, her expenses had so far exceeded her income that by August, 1710, her indebtedness amounted to half a million. Yet much doubt was thrown upon the veracity of this statement by a member who, under the last Administration, had been one of the tellers of the Exchequer, and who declared that to his certain knowledge the private debts of her Majesty did not at that period exceed a hundred and fifty thousand pounds, with ample means of meeting this liability out of arrears due to herself. Under these circumstances some investigation should have appeared necessary to the most loyal and courtly subjects; but the matter, as usual, was decided by party feeling. The Tories saw that the Whigs were full of suspicion as to the purposes for which the money was required. They hastened, therefore, to take advantage of their majority and to suppress all inquiry. The necessary act was passed; and that it might escape opposition in the upper House was tacked to another money bill. The subject continued for some years to exercise the minds of politicians. That the Queen was actually in debt to a considerable amount is sufficiently established by the correspondence of Bolingbroke. So impoverished was the royal purse that, since the accession of the Tory Ministry, the highest officers of the Crown had gone without their salaries, while the subordinates in the civil service were in danger of starvation, and a number of tradesmen of being forced into bankruptcy.* But how it came to pass that the income of a sovereign so remarkably frugal in her personal expenditure should prove so inadequate to her wants, was a mystery which to the Whigs appeared replete with suspicion. At the time they professed their belief that the money was to be used against them at the approaching elections. Early in the succeeding reign they conceived hopes of establishing the fact that a portion of it had been sent abroad, with the complicity of the

* Even the plenipotentiaries could not get their salaries, and were put to great embarrassment to meet their expenses. See Bolingbroke to Lord Privy Seal, March 4—15.

Ministers, for the service of the Pretender; but they failed to trace more than a thousand pounds to this destination. Yet the mystery, when examined without passion, seems capable of a very easy solution. From the estimates furnished to the Parliament in 1689, it is clear that the six hundred thousand a year, then allotted for the Civil List, allowed no great margin to the sovereign for extravagance or even generosity. Anne had contented herself with only five hundred thousand, hoping, by the strictest parsimony in her private expenses, to make that sum sufficient. But her liberality towards those she loved amounted almost to a vice, and her charities were probably more than she could afford. Two hundred thousand pounds were spent on the castle of Blenheim; and it is unlikely that Marlborough was the only person who profited by Anne's munificence. More than a hundred thousand pounds, it was computed, went in feeding the poor Palatines; and it is unlikely that the Palatines were the only beggars who excited the sympathy of the kind-hearted Queen.

The last act of this Parliament, upon which the Whigs endeavoured to fasten as a reproach the epithet of "pacific," was to repair to St. Paul's on the 7th of July, the day appointed by Anne for public thanksgiving. The Commons mustered but thinly. The country gentlemen of that age always became impatient as summer advanced to return to the superintendence of their ripening crops. A Parliament, therefore, protracted to the very unusual period of July was certain to be a mere remnant; and on this occasion nearly all the Whig members chose to absent themselves. The procession, moreover, was deprived of much of its effectiveness by the non-attendance of the Queen, who was prevented from taking part in it by another attack of gout. The day, however, passed off joyfully. The *Te Deum* was chanted in the cathedral with distant accompaniments from the guns of the Tower and the parks, and from the bells of a hundred surrounding steeples. If the music was indeed Handel's, it must have taken by surprise an audience accustomed to no grander strains than those of Weldon and Eccles.* As night drew on London was in a blaze with bon-

* The Utrecht Te Deum and Jubilate were composed expressly for this occasion; but whether they were performed on that day at St. Paul's or at the chapel of St. James's is undecided.—Schælcher, Life of Handel.

fires and illuminations. There was one display of fireworks on the Thames in front of Whitehall; and another, provided by the City, in Smithfield. A great crowd assembled before Somerset House, the exterior of which presented a splendid appearance, while the vast quadrangle was filled by a concourse of guests who assisted at a dinner and ball of unparalleled magnificence. It was here that the Duke d'Aumont, after his house in Great Ormond Street had been burned down by accident, or, as the Tories asserted, by Whig incendiaries, had taken up his residence at the request of the Government. Two days before the thanksgiving he had made his public entry into London, had been received in state by the Queen, and had addressed to her a speech of florid compliments. Such conditions of peace, he observed, as those of which she had been the arbiter, insuring as they did both the happiness of her subjects and the advantage of her Allies, outshone all the glories of Elizabeth's reign.*

Anne was sufficiently recovered nine days afterwards to repair to the Parliament and to deliver in person the speech with which she closed the session. She passed a high encomium upon the affection, duty, and zeal which had been displayed by the Commons, and expressed a hope that the Parliament she might meet in the winter would be resolved to act upon the same principles. One passage, however, which her Ministers had ventured to place in her mouth gave great offence. She hoped, she said, that before Parliament again assembled the principles of commerce would be so well understood that the advantageous conditions she had arranged with France would be made effectual. A majority of the members, and the whole mercantile community, justly regarded this as an affront to their understandings. Two or three statesmen, without any practical experience of trade, had chosen, without consulting any competent advisers, to conclude a treaty of a thoroughly revolutionary character. It had now been sufficiently examined; the highest commercial authorities in the kingdom had unanimously pronounced that, if carried into effect, it would be ruinous to the nation, and many even of the firmest supporters of the Government had allowed themselves to be governed by their advice. Yet conceit still prompted these statesmen to retort, through the lips of

* Lettres Historiques; Historical Mercury.

royalty, that the men who gave such counsel knew nothing about the business upon which their bread depended, and to which their lives had been devoted.

It did not escape notice that the customary words in which her Majesty announced her determination to support the succession of Hanover were omitted on this occasion. That a form so consonant to the feelings of the nation should have been neglected on the eve of a general election, is not a little remarkable. Judging from the evidence with which we are now furnished this singular omission was simply significant of a new stage in the perplexities of Oxford.

A calm perusal of all that testimony upon which any reliance can be founded, must convince any unprejudiced person that both Oxford and Bolingbroke would have been as zealous in promoting the succession of the Hanoverians as their Whig antagonists, could they have seen any reasonable prospects of their continuing in power with that family on the throne. Neither of these Ministers was troubled with those compunctions about the indefeasible rights of sovereigns which tormented the consciences of many Tory squires. Both were too much men of the world to entertain any sentimental affection for a prince whom they had never seen, and whose character they had only heard described by his agents and idolators. One of their first acts on entering upon the government had been to write to the Elector professing their attachment to his person and their resolution to further his interests with all their ability.* But they had found to their mortification the Elector, and every person about him, hopelessly prejudiced against them.† The Whigs had been beforehand with their own version of the causes which led to the change of Ministry; and George was convinced that the Tories were rascals who wanted to rob him of his inheritance, and who were brought to power for the express purpose of facilitating the restoration of the Prince of Wales. He answered their letters politely; but he drew closer the bonds between himself and the Whigs. The latter sedulously fostered the opinion his Highness had conceived of their

* Macpherson, Original Papers.

† Swift declares that their ill success was owing to their neglecting to corrupt Robethon, the Elector's principal councillor and favourite.—Inquiry into the Behaviour of the Queen's last Ministry.

rivals. Every account of English affairs which reached his ear came through poisoned channels. How, it was urged, could a peace so derogatory to the interests of Europe and the honour of England have been concluded, unless it was necessary to an ulterior scheme? The King of France, now delivered from his other embarrassments, would be at liberty to devote himself anew to the project so pleasing to his vanity of restoring the family which had thrown itself upon his hospitality and protection. For the notion that the clause in the treaty by which Louis engaged to render no assistance to the Pretender, was intended as anything more than a mere form, was laughed to scorn by the Whigs; and the same contempt was expressed for those passages in the royal speeches in which the Queen reiterated her determination to do all in her power to uphold the Act of Settlement. It was all a comedy. The Ministers were merely waiting until they had secured the Parliament and concerted measures with the French king, and then the restoration would be accomplished.*

With the gates of Hanover thus shut in their faces, with the Queen visibly declining to her grave, and with the certainty before them that, as soon as the Elector was seated on the throne, the reign of the Whigs would re-commence, and their own actions would be scrutinized with the same malignity as a Parliament devoted to themselves had just scrutinized the actions of Marlborough and Walpole, it is not strange that these sorely beset men should have turned to calculate what really were the chances of the Pretender. Without the least intention of committing himself to the cause of the Stuarts by any overt act, nay, by any measure that could really serve them, Oxford wished them to think that, when matters were ripe, he would exert himself in their favour.† The Jacobite agents were, of course, ready to promise him anything in the name of their master, except that he would change his religion. These men knew so well how Oxford and Bolingbroke were regarded at Hanover that they often felt secure of them. It must, they thought, be soon apparent to Ministers so situated that their

* See the Correspondence in the Macpherson, Hanover Papers, particularly a letter of Marlborough to Robethon, November 30, 1713.

† In this course he persisted to the end of his life, as the letters discovered by Sir James Mackintosh prove.

only means of saving their fortunes, perhaps their heads, was to throw themselves entirely into the cause of the Stuarts; and to this conceit the Ministers were not a little indebted. Instructions from the Pretender were conveyed to his adherents to concur with them in their plans of peace, and generally to support them against the schemes and intrigues of the Whigs. Yet the behaviour of Oxford was a puzzle which the Jacobite agents were never able to master. Although always willing to receive them, and to listen with solemn attention to what they had to say, he never would do anything they required. If they complained that too much was said in the royal speeches about Hanover, the Treasurer would reply that he must swim with the tide, that it was absolutely necessary to content the Whigs, that it would be imprudent to do anything which might startle the public. He admitted with easy good-humour that he was wrong in allowing so many Whigs to continue as lieutenants of shires and justices of the peace. The mistake, he promised, should soon be rectified. But the promise was repeated again and again, and still the commissions remained as they were.*

All this admits of easy explanation. The tactics of Oxford were the same as those of Marlborough; but he had not the same good fortune. The great soldier had contrived to inspire a belief of his sincerity in the successor who had every chance of winning. Oxford's hopes in that direction were almost desperate. Yet he could not bring himself to espouse the cause of the Pretender; nor is it likely that he ever entertained the subject seriously. The chances of success on that side were comparatively insignificant; and the penalty of failure, he knew, would be a death on the scaffold. The little energy his mind possessed was benumbed by the difficulties and uncertainties of his position. He did nothing; he was content to let matters drift on their course. He continued his assiduities to the Court of Hanover; he was careful not to push matters far against the Whigs, who would soon be his judges. But at the same time he continued to receive the visits of Jacobite emissaries. The omission in the royal speech of the customary

* Macpherson, Stuart Papers.

sentence about the Hanoverian family was a slight, and, as he may have deemed, a harmless concession to the Stuarts.*

The steady hand and determined will of Bolingbroke might perhaps have piloted the Administration safely through its perils had he been at the helm. But he was only a subordinate, and one with so little power that the Jacobites appear to have thought it scarcely worth their while to bestow much pains upon him. With the Queen he had no influence.† Her simple mind had been entirely captivated by the decorous exterior and high moral character of the Treasurer, and it was with him alone that she would vouchsafe to converse on matters of business. Bolingbroke was expected to be contented with the position of a superior clerk, to negotiate treaties, to correspond with ambassadors, and, in a word, to transact all the work of government, without being admitted to a greater share of the royal confidence than his colleague chose to dole out to him. His resentment against Oxford was natural. He felt that he was coupled with a fool, a mere lump of lead, who, by his incapacity and inertness, was dragging the whole body of Ministers to ruin. His own plans are sufficiently clear from his correspondence. He was desirous of obtaining a much firmer hold over the country by removing every Whig in authority from office, and supplying the vacancies thus created with men who were at least not political enemies. If, contrary to expectation, such a change in public feeling should occur as to render possible the restoration of James, then the opportunity might be seized. At all events the Elector and his Whig advisers would, he conceived, hold their heads a little less loftily, and would be more open to an arrangement, if they saw the Tories in a position to throw some impediments in the way of the Protestant succession.

Some changes and promotions were, however, made during

* The dealings of Oxford with the Court of Hanover may be seen in the Macpherson Papers; with the Jacobites in the Macpherson Papers and the Mackintosh Collections. See an article on Cooke's Life of Bolingbroke, *Edinburgh Review*, October, 1835. In one letter he is reported as saying that he would never consent to a German reigning over England. He must have drunk more claret than usual that evening.

† As he frequently declares in his correspondence. But during the last year of the Queen's life his influence with her rose, not, I am convinced, from any increase of her esteem for him, but necessarily from the decay of her confidence in Oxford.

the spring and summer. Francis Atterbury, the most accomplished and eloquent of the Tory clergymen, became Bishop of Rochester, though sorely against the wishes of Anne who, while sympathizing with his doctrine, held in abhorrence the factiousness of his temper. Her dislike of turbulent characters had already determined her to refuse a mitre for Sacheverell; and the saint had been forced to content himself with the rectory of St. Andrew's, Holborn, where his virtues were exercised with less danger to society than on the episcopal bench.* Smallridge, one of the royal chaplains, had raised himself to a high place in her esteem by the meekness and piety of his demeanour, and in public favour by the courage with which he had confronted the fury of the Whigs in the days of the trial. He was now rewarded with the see of Bristol, which had become vacant by the translation of Robinson to the see of London. The expectation that Swift would be made a bishop had once been so general that Nottingham had referred to the rumour with a devout shudder in the House of Lords; but it is very doubtful whether Harcourt or Oxford ever ventured to recommend that such a dignity should be conferred upon the author of a "Tale of a Tub." Ormond consoled him to some extent for his disappointment by awarding him the deanery of St. Patrick's, which lay in his patronage as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. Ormond himself was secured to the Ministers by the wardenship of the Cinque Ports and by a pension of five thousand a year upon the Irish revenues, which was granted to him on the pretext of the Parliament having recently re-annexed to the crown some royalties in Tipperary which had been for some time in his family. But the appointment which excited most comment was that of the Earl of Mar to be Secretary of State for North Britain. This nobleman had recently distinguished himself by presenting addresses from some corporations in Scotland which upheld the doctrine of hereditary right in terms more significant than any yet employed by Tories. The Whigs of course interpreted his introduction to office as an almost open avowal of Jacobitism on the part of the Ministers. But there is no evidence that Mar entertained at this time any decided predilection for the Stuarts. He had up to a recent date been

* Dartmouth's Note to Burnet.

reputed a zealous Whig, and had cordially promoted the Union. His efforts to obtain the favour of George were unremitting down to the very moment of his breaking out into rebellion; and to that last unhappy step he seems to have been urged less by any sympathy for the Pretender than by the sense of disappointment which he experienced in common with Bolingbroke, Ormond, and other leaders of the Tory party. Dartmouth at the same time was made Privy Seal, and relinquished his secretaryship, which was given to the Speaker, Bromley. The grounds for believing that Dartmouth, high Tory as he was, was adverse to the Hanoverian succession, are altogether insufficient.*

A gold medal commemorative of the peace was distributed to each member of the Parliament upon the prorogation. The reverse exhibited Britannia waving an olive-branch over an agricultural landscape and a sea crowded with shipping. In August the Parliament was dissolved, and soon afterwards the writs were issued for returning a new Parliament on the 12th of November.†

To a large proportion of Englishmen it seemed that the destinies of the country would probably depend upon the character of the representatives who should now be chosen. Carefully as the growing infirmities of Anne were kept from the public knowledge, a general opinion prevailed that the chances of her surviving another triennial Parliament were but small. And who would be her successor? Would a majority of the nation stand firmly to the Protestant religion, take up arms, if necessary, to repel the prince who, by right of birth, was their sovereign, and render obedience to an unknown German? Or would those precepts touching the sinfulness of resistance which English clergymen had from time immemorial inculcated upon their congregations, triumph, when the hour of trial came, over acts of Parliament; and would the Prince of Wales, Papist as he might be, be suffered to make his way

* My opinion generally is that too much stress has been laid on the reports of these Jacobite emissaries. They were sanguine men who imagined that the great body of Englishmen thought as they did. I cannot help thinking that they frequently exaggerated any expressions of attachment for the exiled family which important personages let fall.

† Lettres Historiques; Historical Mercury; Oldmixon.

unopposed to the throne of his ancestors? That so much anxiety should have existed upon this subject may now appear matter of surprise. The utter insignificance of that party in England which was in favour of a restoration was so fully demonstrated only a year afterwards by the total absence of all resistance to the mere parliamentary title of George, that all doubts of the future seem ludicrously unfounded. That the whole nation was at this time tormented by fears about the succession may be ascribed without hesitation to certain formulas constantly in the mouths of the clergy and laity of the Tory party. What was to be thought of men whose favourite theme was that the power of kings was from God, that rebellion against them was as the sin of witchcraft, and who in every address they presented to Anne introduced the doctrine of hereditary right and the unlawfulness of resistance? Was it not to be supposed that the practice of such men would be a little in conformity with their principles, that they were convinced of the sinfulness of the Revolution, and were desirous to atone for their guilt by calling back the son of James to the throne? Yet the occurrences of each day show how many precepts of religion there are to which men listen with devout respect, but without the smallest intention of shaping their conduct by them. Every Christian is constantly reminded that, if a fellow creature purloins from him a garment, it is his duty, instead of taking offence, to offer the thief as many more garments as his wants or his covetousness may require; and that if an enemy deals him a blow on the cheek, he should, so far from retaliating, present the other cheek to the smiter. Yet thieves and bullies have long since discovered that professors of the gospel are no more to be robbed and insulted with impunity than the most unbelieving pagan in the land. The doctrine of non-resistance to kings, educed from the writings of Saint Paul, is plainly one of the most absurd that ever impressed itself upon the human imagination. It does seem remarkable to the sense of modern times that, because the apostle very properly cautioned a handful of helpless sectaries not to commit suicide by affronting the overwhelming power of Nero, his words should have been regarded down to the eighteenth century as a divine command to great nations to submit like lambs to the violence and caprices

of any half-witted tyrant to whom the sceptre had descended in due course. But in truth, whether the Tories regarded the doctrine as of divine origin or not it is sufficiently clear that very few of them entertained any design of fulfilling it by supporting James against the sovereign who had been nominated by the Parliament. The phrases "divine right," "hereditary right," and "non-resistance," may be considered as having lost all practical meaning to those who uttered them, and as having degenerated into mere war-cries, or masonic signs by which a Tory recognized his friends.

The alarm which the repetition of these formulas created among the Whigs only encouraged their antagonists to assert them with greater frequency and vehemence. The Whigs, indeed, were almost distracted by their apprehensions of the future. Visions of priests flaunting in procession along Cheapside and Fleet Street, of pious Churchmen ejected from their livings and subjected to indignities at the hands of a Popish sovereign, of French dragoons and Irish cut-throats quartered on English homesteads, and driving the people to mass at the point of the bayonet, seem to have disturbed the tranquillity of many excellent persons. The leaders of the party assumed as a matter of course that the Queen was concerting plans with her Ministers for the succession of the Pretender. The Hanoverian resident was beset from morning till night by anxious visitors, and despatched letter after letter to his court filled with the suggestions and entreaties to which the fears of his visitors gave rise. There was, in the opinion of the Whigs, but one way by which the House of Hanover could preserve to itself the succession to the English throne. If it should be thought impossible to send over at once the immediate heir, the aged Princess Sophia, the Elector, or at all events his son, the Electoral Prince, should come and remain on the spot, with full powers to assume the government as soon as the demise should take place. Unless this provision were made, the Ministers would, when the dissolution of Anne appeared imminent, have time to summon the Pretender into the kingdom; and if once he assumed the regal authority, habit and superstition would paralyze the minds of five-sixths of the population. An interval of a few hours might suffice to destroy the fabric of

the Protestant succession. The nation would sink spell-bound under the mystic influence of hereditary right. Fortunately for the comfort of Anne's last days the German heirs to the throne were unwilling, and indeed unable, to act on this advice. They had perhaps little personal affection for the Queen; but they wisely shrank from taking a step which, they knew, would cause her deep pain, which she would certainly resent by every means in her power, and which might have the effect of arraying against themselves the great body of her subjects, who, whatever might be their sentiments as regarded the succession, resented her grievances as their own. It was moreover judged dangerous and impracticable that the heir or a regent should attempt the journey without being escorted by a fleet; and how was a fleet to be obtained? The Dutch were not likely to lend their ships for an undertaking that would exasperate the Queen and her Ministers. It was decided therefore to rely upon those measures of precaution which had been prescribed by the Act of Regency. Sealed packets containing the names of persons duly authorized by the Princess to assume the regency upon the demise had been already deposited with the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lord Chancellor, and the Hanoverian resident. There had been some informality in these observances; but this was now rectified.*

The literary adherents of both factions were of course in full activity, and considerable sums of money were expended in diffusing their productions. The action of the recent Parliament touching the treaty of commerce furnished a good field for dispute; but here it was evident, from the greater favour with which the Whig pamphlets were received, that the country sided with the rejecters of the treaty. The extreme Tory performances, however, did not want readers. A book of singular boldness made its appearance during the month of October, entitled "The Hereditary Right of the Crown of England asserted," in which the author, a non-juring clergyman, endeavoured to prove from examples in English history that allegiance was not due, and never had in fact been universally rendered, to a king in possession whose lineal title was imperfect. The Ministers felt themselves compelled to take

* Macpherson Papers.

proceedings against the audacious propounder of these doctrines. A heavy sentence was passed on the culprit, but the Ministers, with that good nature which they invariably manifested towards literary men, procured its remission by the Crown; and the apparent significance of this act of grace added not a little to the suspicions of the Whigs.* Richard Steele, who was then aspiring to a seat in Parliament, thought proper to produce a pamphlet on the other side called the "Crisis," to which his party gave a wide circulation. It consisted merely of a reprint of the Acts of Parliament relating to the succession, and of a pompous exhortation to every one, especially clergymen, to read them. The only gratifying result, as far as can be known, of this book, which, as will shortly be seen, ruined its author, was that it drew from Swift one of the wittiest reviews in the language. Defoe, the most imprudent of geniuses, narrowly escaped being a second time pilloried and incarcerated. The manner in which the public had misinterpreted his "Shortest Way with the Dissenters," should have warned him of the danger of employing irony. He now published two pamphlets, of which one was entitled "Reasons against the Succession of the House of Hanover," and the other "Considerations of the Advantages of the Pretender's possessing the Crown of Great Britain." The object, no doubt, was by an attractive title to facilitate the sale of a book written with intentions diametrically opposed to the promise of the title-page. But, as may well be supposed, twenty persons heard of the treasonable title for one person who read the book. The Whigs, without troubling themselves to examine the pages, raised an outcry. The attention of the Ministers was drawn to the obnoxious little works; and Defoe, to make his peace, was compelled to resort to means sufficiently humiliating for an author. He presented a petition to the Queen stating that the titles and arguments of his books were intended in an ironical sense; and this excuse, conveyed to the understanding of Anne by the good-humoured Oxford, was, after an interval of anxious delay, admitted as an atonement for the offence.

Fortified by these literary stimulants, the electors of England

* There is a long account of this book in Chamberlen's History of Queen Anne.

proceeded to the poll. It was soon evident that, in spite of the unpopular treaty of commerce, the great bulk of the nation remained firm in its attachment to the Tory Administration. It was in vain that the Whig candidates wore in their hats locks of wool to remind an ungrateful people by this display of the staple commodity, of their devotion to the trade and prosperity of the commonwealth. The oak-leaf which was sported by their rivals appealed successfully to the hearts of thousands of rustic voters. The gentleman who bore that beautiful symbol in his hat had, it was conceived, a spirit above the sordid considerations of commerce, of progress, education, and science. He was hearty in the cause of monarchy and the Established Church, and abhorred such impious doctrines as that kings might lawfully be resisted. In London indeed the Whigs recovered their former position, and after a searching scrutiny into the votes polled by their opponents, succeeded in carrying all four seats. But at the close of the elections the party found itself outnumbered in the House of Commons by at least two members against one.*

Even for this position the Whigs were indebted to the result of the elections in Scotland. The assistance they had so iniquitously afforded to the Scotch members in their attempt to tear asunder the United Kingdom rendered them for the moment the popular party in North Britain. The cry for dissolving the bonds between England and Scotland rang all over this part of the island. At Edinburgh, the electors who returned Lockhart placed in his hands a petition that the Union might be dissolved, with a request that he would present it to the House of Commons. They then assembled in different parts of the city to drink to the Queen's health and the speedy accomplishment of their wishes. It had become necessary to keep the Jacobites under by military force. A party in the metropolis which had determined to celebrate the Pretender's birthday by parading through the streets his effigy clothed in the royal robes, and by burning the effigies of the Princess Sophia and the Elector of Hanover, was only prevented from fulfilling their design by the appearance of twelve companies of horse and foot. At Montrose, where no soldiers were at

* Lettres Historiques; Oldmixon; Chamberlen.

hand, a similar demonstration of feeling actually took place.* The only consolatory circumstance which an Englishman could discern in the aspect of Scotland was that at this conjuncture the commission of the general assembly put forth "a seasonable warning against the dangers of Popery." The Ministers and Elders admitted indeed that the Union was a great evil; but they argued that to expect a remedy from the Pretender was nothing but a delusion and a bait to the simple. And even in the case that the Pretender should be disposed to gratify Scotchmen on this point, to what, they reasoned, would the concession amount if it were accompanied with the unutterable evils of a tyrannical Government and the abominations of Popery?

The struggles between the Whigs and Tories of Dublin had, for some time past, been watched with nervous anxiety by their partisans in England. One of the first acts of the Ministry upon acceding to power had been to reward Sir Constantine Phipps for his defence of Sacheverell by restoring to him the Chancellorship of Ireland. This lawyer was pleased to find upon his arrival at Dublin that Wharton, during the three months he had resided there as Lord Lieutenant, had not had sufficient time, with all his energy, to root out the Tories from the government of the city. The municipal offices were pretty equally divided between the members of the opposed factions. The encouragement Phipps afforded to his own party soon turned the balance. Under his administration of the law the Whigs complained that the Irish Papists had grown as bold as when Tyrconnel ruled the kingdom as the instrument of James. The lenity with which he treated political scribblers was the exact counterpart of the conduct of the Ministers at home. It seemed that no enunciation of Jacobitical principles could provoke him to dart the thunderbolts of the law at the head of the venturesome author. His strange placability in this respect, coupled with his interference in a dispute about the election of a mayor which, for more than a year, had inflamed the city, enraged the Whigs almost to madness. The Roman Catholic gentry and the savage hordes of the native population sided on all occasions with the Tories. The Protestant dissenters, who

* Lockhart's Memoirs; Lettres Historiques; Wright's History of Scotland.

were numerous, took the part of the Whigs; and the consequence was that Dublin was the scene of continual tumults which were not unfrequently attended with bloodshed. At this conjuncture the necessity of obtaining fresh supplies for carrying on the government of Ireland compelled the summoning of a Parliament. It was decided that Shrewsbury, whose winning address and manners were often found to act as a charm upon heated politicians, should fill the office of Lord Lieutenant. He was accordingly recalled from France, and, after a short delay in England, proceeded to Dublin.

If it were a principal object of the Ministers to enhance the power of the Tories and to depress the Whigs, their choice of Shrewsbury was not a fortunate one. Although this nobleman had been impelled by envy or patriotic detestation of Marlborough's monopoly of power to ally himself with Tory statesmen, he had never become, or even pretended to become, a convert to Tory principles. He was strongly attached to the scheme of the Protestant succession, and shared the suspicions which the Whigs entertained of men who were for ever talking of the divine right of kings. The state of exhilaration in which he found the Papists and Jacobites upon his arrival urged him, as a matter of conscience, to declare himself without reserve. The anniversary of William's birthday was celebrated at the castle with more than the usual magnificence. In the course of the banquet the Lord Lieutenant announced that his political principles were the same as in 1688, and drained a bumper to the pious and glorious memory of the late King. The Tories were greatly mortified by this profession of Whiggism, and one clergyman expressed his vexation in a manner which excited roars of laughter among the opposite faction. The Bishop of Cork remarked to his congregation that drinking to the memory of the dead was a wicked custom, and savoured of Popery. Drinking to the dead, it seemed to him, was like praying for the dead.

Passions were wound up to such a height in Dublin, that it was apprehended the elections would not pass off without a riot; and notwithstanding the precautions taken by the Sheriffs, a riot did actually occur. The Tory candidates went to the polling-place with all the rabble of the city at their

heels. As soon as it became known that the day was going in favour of the Whigs, there was a rush towards the hustings. The scaffolding was torn down, and the electors were pelted off the ground. The soldiers then came on the scene, and tried to disperse the mob by firing blank cartridges. But the sticks and stones of the Irish rascals at length proved too much for their patience. A few of them fired with ball, and several persons in the crowd were wounded, though one man only was shot dead. The Whig candidates were eventually returned.

Shrewsbury, in his speech to the Parliament, made a very earnest exhortation to unanimity. But words which the sovereign herself had tried without effect in the far less troubled atmosphere of England were uttered to the winds in Ireland. It became at once evident by the success of the Whigs of the Lower House in the election of a Speaker, that this faction had the upper hand in the most effective part of the Parliament. They soon showed their determination to be contented upon some matters which lay near their hearts. Their first measure was to appoint a committee to prepare a bill for attainting the Pretender and his adherents of high treason, and for offering a reward to any person who should capture him alive or dead if he presumed to set foot in Ireland. They next turned with savage resentment upon Phipps. A Jacobite book named "Memoirs of the Chevalier de St. George," the publisher of which had escaped punishment through the intercession of the Chancellor, was now voted a seditious and treasonable libel; and a resolution was passed that an address should be presented to the Crown praying for the removal of an officer who represented as an object of mercy a person so dangerous to the Commonwealth. The House of Lords, where the Tories mustered in strength, stood forth to befriend Phipps; and thus two addresses were soon on their way to London, one complaining of the oppression under which the kingdom groaned through the evil administration of the highest legal dignitary, and the other eulogising the Chancellor as a discerning and vigilant officer, a true lover of the Church, and a zealous assertor of the prerogative. Fortunately for the Government, the Commons did not carry their enmity to the point of withholding a supply until their request was granted. Shrewsbury was enabled

before Christmas Day to give the royal assent to a bill renewing the duties on beer and spirits. He then, in obedience to instructions from home, prorogued and afterwards dissolved a Parliament which promised to engender nothing but disputes between its two Houses.*

Meanwhile the anxiety which had long prevailed in England respecting the Queen's health had culminated in a panic. On Christmas Eve, Anne, who was then residing at Windsor Castle, was seized with a paroxysm of fever, arising probably from suppressed gout, and for several hours remained in a state of unconsciousness. She recovered; but several relapses ensued; and it was a fortnight before the Ministers were relieved from their fears for her life by seeing her in tortures from the open declaration of the malady.† Their conduct during this critical period was closely watched and variously interpreted by Whig and Jacobite spies. Schutz, the Hanoverian agent, attended Oxford like his shadow; but could extract little information from that mysterious personage. An audience at the public levée which he held at his own house was of small utility: for although the Minister, with a solemn look of business, would make a pretence of taking the agent apart, his eye was always on the company, and he would continually break off the conversation to go and salute any acquaintance who chanced to drop in. Private interviews at the Treasury proved just as futile. To the most important questions Oxford would reply with polite inquiries after the Elector's health, and would regret that his occupations and domestic affairs did not allow of his seeing his questioner more frequently.‡ In the City all was consternation. Rumours circulated from time to time that the Queen was dead, that an armament was in preparation at Brest to convey the Pretender to these shores, that the Irish regiments were hurrying towards Calais or Boulogne, and that several clans of Highlanders secretly hired by the Ministers were about to march southward and join the Pretender as soon as he landed. There was the usual run on the Bank, and the usual assertion by the Tories that it was excited by the malice of the Whigs. The

* Lettres Historiques; Historical Mercury; Wright's History of Ireland.

† Lettres Historiques; Lamberty; Bolingbroke to Shrewsbury, January 5—16.

‡ Macpherson, Hanover Papers.

stock fell in the course of a few days from a hundred and twenty-six to a hundred and sixteen, and the Ministers judged it expedient to fortify the institution with the loan of fifty thousand pounds. As soon as Anne was sufficiently convalescent she addressed a letter to the Lord Mayor informing him of her happy recovery, and enjoined him to use his efforts to contradict the reports spread by disaffected persons to the injury of the public credit.*

To the meeting of the Parliament the Ministers might look forward with tranquillity. It might perhaps be doubtful to which side the balance of the Lords would incline; but of the Lower House they might feel absolutely secure. Bolingbroke was, however, anxious to deprive the Whigs of a weapon they were for ever brandishing in the eyes of the Tories, and which was likely to be unsheathed with full pomp in the forthcoming session,—the alleged insecurity of the Protestant succession. He conceived hopes that he had hit upon the right plan. Two days before the Parliament assembled Thomas Harley and a son of the Secretary Bromley were despatched to Hanover with a letter from the Queen and with instructions to press the Princess and the Elector for an explicit answer upon one point. Inasmuch, these agents were to represent, as the inclinations of her Majesty, the laws by which the succession had been established in the House of Hanover, and the oaths which every person who entered upon office was compelled to take, continued the same as they ever had been, it was impossible that any real danger could menace the succession of Hanover. Her Majesty would therefore take it very ill if any countenance was afforded to a faction in her kingdom whose sole aim was to regain that power which, when possessed of it, they had abused. If the Princess or the Elector had any additional securities to propose, which were consistent with her Majesty's safety and honour, her Majesty would not only give her consent to but promote their proposals. But they might rest assured that proposals that

* Lettres Historiques; Lamberty; Bolingbroke to the Queen, February 3—14. In this letter is a passage for which the writer deserved hanging. "Your Majesty's letter to the Lord Mayor was received with transports of joy, and will, I hope, put some stop to those infamous proceedings by which the Whigs have on this occasion shown from the highest of them down to the lowest what they always had at heart, ingratitude and disloyalty."

came from other quarters, and which were inconsistent with her Majesty's dignity and security, would be energetically opposed by her and by all her faithful servants. The Elector, in answer to these representations, expressed himself satisfied with what had been done to secure the succession in his family, and protested that he reposed full confidence in the Queen.*

The last Parliament which Anne was destined to see was opened by commission on the 16th of February. There was no speech, as the Queen entertained hopes of being soon able to deliver her sentiments in person. Sir Thomas Hanmer, who, by his opposition to the generally unpopular treaty of commerce, had gained the good opinion of the Whigs without forfeiting the confidence of the Tories, was elected to the chair by an unanimous vote. The proceedings were enlivened by an amusing incident. Steele, the best of good fellows, the most lively, amiable and indiscreet of men, had contrived to obtain the suffrages of the electors of Stockbridge, a little decaying borough of Hampshire, which was disfranchised in 1832. He entered the House overflowing with importance, and seized the first opportunity of displaying his oratorical talents. After making some remarks on the bill of commerce, and passing an eulogium on Hanmer, "I rise," he continued, "to do honour to the gentleman by whose weight and authority that pernicious bill was thrown out." These observations from a veteran member would doubtless have excited no animadversion. But a great part of the assembly was scandalized that a new member, a mere writer of gossiping essays, whom the host of country squires considered as ranking socially little higher than the rope-dancers and fiddlers who supplied an idle town with amusement, should on the first day of his Parliamentary experience, instead of feeling abashed by his own unworthiness and awed by the august company in which he found himself, aspire to the position of a leader and bestow his patronage upon a statesman of high reputation. He was interrupted by loud cries of "Tatler! Tatler!" His unlucky expression of "rising to do honour" to the Speaker provoked a roar of derision; and utterly crestfallen he made

* Swift's Four Last Years of the Queen; Bolingbroke to Strafford, February 13—24. The letter which Harley conveyed to the Elector was published in the newspapers.

his way to the door through a lane of contemptuous critics. Steele's enemies might have been contented with inflicting so severe a mortification upon his vanity. But it was soon manifest that their resentment lay deeper than to be satisfied by a hearty laugh at his expense.*

The Houses then adjourned for a fortnight. During the interval the ratifications of the treaties of peace and commerce with Spain, which had been delayed for nearly a year, were exchanged; and peace with that country was proclaimed in London on the 1st of March. The most important articles in these treaties were the cession of Gibraltar and the island of Minorca to the Queen, and the transference to her or to the company she might appoint of the assiento contract, implying the exclusive right of importing negroes into some portions of the Spanish dominions in America. Philip agreed at the same time to accord an amnesty to his revolted subjects, the Catalans, and to yield the kingdom of Sicily to the Duke of Savoy.

It is happily unnecessary to waste time in the present day in lamenting the moral organization of British Ministers who, but one hundred and fifty years ago, could desire that their country should possess the monopoly of supplying Spanish masters with negro slaves. Morality is evidently a science which constantly progresses and makes new discoveries. Socrates gently condemned certain vices which the more advanced morality of Christian communities now regards as the most abominable of crimes. The practice of feeding the hungry and ministering to the helpless sick was accounted a virtue, not an obligation, in ancient times. No philosopher, Greek or Roman, thought it wrong on principle that a conqueror should sell his captives, a creditor the person of his insolvent debtor, or that a rich man should be absolute master of the energies of thousands of his fellow-creatures. In truth, the doctrine that every man owes it to his fellow-creatures to contribute to their happiness instead of profiting by their misfortunes, advanced but slowly even in countries professing a religion of which that doctrine is the foremost tenet. The explorers in mechanical science had invented the compass, printing, gunpowder, before the moral philosopher had discovered that liberty was Nature's gift to

* Parliamentary History.

man, of which he could not be deprived without injustice. The discovery was, however, at length made, and the slavery of white men ceased in the most enlightened kingdoms of Europe. But it was necessary that morality should make further progress before it perceived that the same doctrine applied to black men as to white. Counting from the period which may be assigned for the abolition of the slavery of white men in England a century elapsed before speculators arose to convince the world of sin in enslaving the blacks. The acceptance of the assiento contract was condemned by many contemporary writers on the ground of its being adverse to the national interest. But not one person seems to have imagined that there was anything immoral or unjustifiable in the business itself. Indeed a doubt on the subject would have been regarded as impious by that generation; for as a matter of universal belief the blacks were the posterity of Canaan, whom God, speaking through the mouth of Noah, had condemned to serve his brethren.

The origin of the assiento contract was the need experienced by the Spaniards of procuring labourers for their mines in Mexico and the Brazils. Having extirpated with improvident brutality most of the aboriginal population of those countries, they began, in the seventeenth century, to turn with wistful eyes to that portion of the globe which Nature seemed to have predestined as a perpetual source of supply to the wants of the white lords of mankind. As, however, the Spaniards had no settlements in Africa, it was necessary for them to make terms with some power possessed of greater facilities for kidnapping the blacks. Bargains were struck successively with the Genoese and the King of Portugal. But as the King of Spain stipulated always to be paid a high percentage upon the value of every negro imported, neither the Genoese nor his Portuguese Majesty found the contract sufficiently profitable to tempt them to renew it. In 1702 a French company undertook the work with vigour, and for a time, it was asserted, with good pecuniary results. But whether from the impediments the war threw in its way, or from other causes, the prosperity of the company was of brief duration. Indeed, experience went so far to prove the worthlessness of the contract that the Queen, in

treating for its cession to herself, prevailed upon the Catholic king to concede with it a further important privilege. This was the right of sending two ships annually, each of five hundred tons burden, to the Spanish dominions in America with cargoes of merchandize. The manner in which these provisions of the treaty were subsequently carried out, the further concessions which the Spanish Government was induced to make, the encroachments and tricks of our merchants, which at length forced on a war between the two countries, cannot be related here, but they form an interesting and instructive episode in the history of British commerce.

The Directors of the South Sea Company had been led by Oxford to expect that the privileges thus secured would be handed over to them without any detraction. They were much mortified when the intimation was made that a full quarter of the profits would be reserved for assignees of the Queen. At a general meeting of the stock-holders some warm speeches were made against accepting the contract and its appended privileges upon such conditions. But the Directors, confident that, even with this abridgment, the gains of the company by the opening of commercial intercourse with Spanish America would be very large, exerted all their influence, and a resolution in favour of accepting the contract was eventually carried. Yet still the clamour did not cease. Who was the party designed by her Majesty to share in the profits of the company? The Whigs had of course their suspicions. It was the Pretender; it was Lord Bolingbroke, Arthur Moore, Lady Masham. The Lords were determined to elucidate this mystery, and continued their inquiries so pertinaciously that the Queen's advisers were at length worried or terrified into surrender, and it was announced that the quarter share would be given up.*

On the 2nd of March, Anne, now grown incapable of walking and almost of standing, was carried in a chair to the House of Lords, and delivered from her royal lips the reflections, exhortations, and reproaches which her Ministers desired to convey to the Parliament. She expressed herself much pleased with the result of her negotiations with Spain. Many advantages, she said, which the merchants of England formerly enjoyed by

* Parliamentary History.

connivance were now secured to them by treaty. She assured the Houses that she would spare no endeavours to render the peace universal. It was the glory of the wisest and greatest of the sovereigns her predecessors to hold the balance of Europe, and to keep it equal by casting in their weight as necessity required. By such conduct they insured the prosperity of the kingdom, and made themselves dreaded by their enemies and useful to their friends. On such principles had she acted, and doubted not that her successors would follow her example. The geographical situation of the country suggested its true interests: it could flourish only by trade, and would be most formidable by the proper application of its naval force. Some sharp animadversions upon the Whigs followed these remarks upon the policy which a British Government ought to pursue. Her Majesty wished that effectual care had been taken, as she had often desired, to suppress those seditious papers and factious rumours by which designing men injured the public credit and made innocent people suffer. There were parties so actuated by malice as to insinuate that the Protestant succession was in danger under her rule. The only object they could have in distracting the public mind with such imaginary evils was to disturb the present tranquillity and involve the commonwealth in real misfortunes. Attempts to weaken her authority, or to render the Crown uneasy to her, could not be the way to strengthen the Protestant succession. She had done, and would continue to do, her best for the welfare of her subjects. It was upon the Parliament that now devolved the duty of assisting the nation to recover from the exhaustion into which it had been thrown by a long war.

Loyal addresses were at once voted by both Houses. In her answer to the address from the Lords, Anne alluded with unusual energy to the subject which was constantly preying upon her mind, the Parliamentary invitation threatened by the Whigs to some member of the House of Hanover. "You," she said, "who stand nearest to the throne will first of all my subjects feel the evil consequences of any diminution of the regal dignity. It is a great comfort to me that I have your assurances of support. Depend upon it I will never give way

to any attempt either on the just authority of the Crown or on your rights and privileges."

To cement the recently formed alliance with the Scotch Members was an important object of the Whigs; and accordingly no sooner did the Peers proceed to business than Wharton dexterously availed himself of an opportunity to display the sympathies of his party with the subjects of the northern part of the island. Steele had in his "Crisis" descanted upon the desirableness of maintaining the Union, and of cultivating the friendship of the Scotch. This had been enough to rouse all the malignity of Swift's nature. He hated the Union because it had been the work of the Whigs. He hated the Scotch for no better reason than that low-minded one which pervaded the English nation almost to our own times, because they were poor. He hated Argyle, now the most prominent representative of the Scottish people, because he would not join with his friends Oxford and Bolingbroke. In his "Public Spirit of the Whigs," written at Oxford's instigation, or at all events with his privity, to confute the arguments put forth in the "Crisis," Swift went out of his way to express his contempt of the Scottish nobility and people. Even he could not deny that the Union was expedient as a measure of security to England. "It might probably," he coolly remarked, "have cost us a war of a year or two to reduce the Scots." But that the Union could be advantageous to England in any other point of view he defied any mortal to show. The notion that there was any equality in the match he treated as ridiculous. "Imagine a person of quality prevailed upon to marry a woman much his inferior and without a groat to her fortune, and her friends arguing that she was as good as her husband because she brought him as numerous a family of poor relations and servants as she found in his house!" The pensions and employments which had been conferred upon some of the Scottish nobility aroused his spleen. "I could point out some with great titles whose whole revenues before the Union would have ill maintained a Welsh justice of the peace." Insults so foul and audacious had naturally excited a tempest of wrath in the hearts of all the Scottish representatives in London, and Wharton now rendered them an acceptable service in calling upon the House to vote

the pamphlet a scandalous and seditious libel. Oxford, strongly suspected of some participation in the work, was challenged, and took refuge in a falsehood. He disclaimed all knowledge of the author, and joined with the majority in an order to commit the printer and publisher into the custody of Black Rod. Immediately afterwards he wrote to Swift in a counterfeit hand, and enclosed a bank bill for a hundred pounds, which he desired might be employed in the defence of those innocent men.* The Whigs did all in their power to discover the author. They carried their complaint to the throne, and Anne so far gratified them as to offer a reward of three hundred pounds for the information. But Swift had conducted his affairs with more prudence than generally belonged to the political writers of his generation. The printer and publisher either knew nothing, or at all events understood it to be their interest to reveal nothing, concerning the authorship. In three days they were set at liberty, and the matter was suffered to drop.†

A Tory House of Commons could not witness the proscription of a Tory pamphlet without feeling a desire to make reprisals. The victim singled out was poor Steele. His "Crisis" was certainly not a performance to electrify a nation: but the Whigs had chosen for their own purposes to puff it into fame, and to give it as wide a circulation as money could effect. The dislike with which the Tories regarded the man as an author was increased by his busy self-importance, his ambition to make a figure. A petition against the election had been lodged; but it stood low on the list, and a numerous party was desirous not only of getting rid of him quickly, but of branding him with some special mark of ignominy. Two Members, therefore, Thomas Harley and Thomas Foley, both near relations of the Treasurer, drew the attention of the House to the "Crisis" and to a periodical called the *Englishman*, both written by Steele, and which, they alleged, contained injurious reflections on the Queen, and were dictated by the spirit of rebellion. The utter disregard of all principles of law and justice which pervaded the Houses during this reign whenever party matters were con-

* The letter is printed in Swift's correspondence.
† Lettres Historiques.

cerned was certainly never shown more flagrantly than in this instance. The object of Steele's writings was to enlist the support of his countrymen for the Protestant succession which had been established by the Act of Settlement. That there was any necessity for admonishing people that there existed, either in the nation generally, in the Parliament, or in the Queen and her Ministers, any inclination to set aside that Act, an historian who views the evidence dispassionately may not now think. But nothing could be more absurd than to deny that a Pretender to the Crown, who had indubitably the sympathies of a powerful and absolute neighbouring sovereign, of a considerable part of the population of Scotland and of an unknown number of fanatics in England was a rival to the Hanoverian family formidable enough to excite anxiety in well-wishing Protestants. A person who, at a conjuncture when the minds of many people are supposed to be wavering, exerts what abilities or influence he possesses to keep his countrymen steady to the laws, is usually considered as acting meritoriously; and such was precisely Steele's case. The Tories argued, however, that to write in support of an established law was to inculcate a suspicion that there was either in the Sovereign, her advisers, or the Parliament a design to subvert that law; and that whoever inculcated such a suspicion committed the crime of sedition.

The Whigs exerted themselves warmly in favour of their author. Steele, carefully primed by Walpole, and with Addison sitting by his side as a prompter, spoke at great length in his defence, and with a modesty and discretion he did not often display. After he had withdrawn, several eminent Whigs rose in succession and endeavoured to shake the determination at which the majority of the House had but too evidently arrived. Walpole in a powerful speech threw out imputations upon the Ministers far plainer and more virulent than any which could be extorted from Steele's writings. "General invectives from the pulpit," was one of his arguments, "against drinking or any other specified vice, are not considered as levelled against any one in particular, except by those persons who know themselves to be guilty. From the irritation displayed by the Ministers against the defender of the Protestant succession, it

becomes, therefore, a fair inference that the writer has hit upon their besetting vice, which is to obstruct that succession." Lord Finch, the eldest son of Nottingham, attempted a maiden speech. He became embarrassed and resumed his seat in confusion. "It is strange," he muttered as he sat down, "that I cannot speak for this man, though I could readily fight for him." The words were overheard, were repeated from bench to bench; and the House, touched by the manly spirit they evinced, encouraged the young orator by loud cheers to proceed But the favour shown to Finch personally was not extended to the cause he pleaded. It was carried by two hundred and fifty-five votes against a hundred and fifty-two that the writings complained of were scandalous and seditious libels, and that Steele should be expelled the House.*

Meanwhile the Lords had entered upon their annual debate touching the state of the nation; and Whig influence succeeded in carrying several addresses highly disagreeable to the Ministers. Oxford made one feeble and blundering attempt to repel the suspicion under which he laboured. He moved for leave to bring in a bill for further securing the Protestant succession by making it treason to introduce any foreign troops into the kingdom. It was retorted upon him that such a law might be turned against the existing guarantees of the succession; against the Dutch, for instance, who might send over their soldiers to aid in the establishment of the Hanoverian family in accordance with their engagements. His lordship meant, perhaps, to exclude only those troops whom the Pretender or his adherents should attempt to introduce. But in any case the bill was unnecessary. If such troops were foreigners the law would regard them as open enemies; if natives, as rebels and traitors. Anglesea saved the embarrassed Minister from further ridicule by saying that a peer who made such a motion must be unacquainted with the method of proceeding in their House. As every Member could bring in any bill he thought fit without asking leave, it would be time enough to consider this bill when it was actually before them.

In the next attack which the Whigs made on the Ministers they had the advantage of being strongly supported by the

* Parliamentary History; Lettres Historiques.

feeling of the country. There was a general opinion that the Catalans, the only people of Spain who had zealously taken part with the Allies, had been shamefully abandoned to the mercy of an enraged sovereign. Philip had indeed consented in his treaty of peace with Great Britain to accord them an amnesty for their offences. But those ancient privileges which secured to the province a special Cortes, certain exemptions from taxation, and the appointment of its own judges, he was determined to abolish; and British diplomacy had failed altogether to turn him from his purpose. It was natural that a King of Spain should feel strongly upon this point. The existence of these privileges had been a source of irritation to every monarch from the time of Ferdinand. Several attempts had been made to extinguish them; but the brave and hardy Catalans, then, as still, the most energetic, industrious, and high-spirited people in the Peninsula, had maintained them successfully against kings as powerful and resolute as Philip II., and ministers as treacherous and rapacious as Olivarez. Philip V. knew that he possessed some advantages over his predecessors. In former times a King of France had been ever ready to send assistance to a people in rebellion against a King of Spain. But that resource was now cut off from the Catalans, and open to their sovereign. Philip had a large army of his own on foot, and could reckon upon his grandfather's troops, engineers, and marshals to assist him in case of necessity.

The Catalans had taken up arms at the instigation of Darmstadt and Peterborough; they had throughout the war approved themselves faithful and zealous co-operators: their claims, therefore, upon the Allies were similar to the claims which the Elector of Bavaria had upon the King of France. Yet while Louis struggled, even at the risk of breaking off negotiations upon which depended the salvation of his kingdom, to make good terms for the ally who had suffered in his cause, the English Ministers, with almost unlimited power of dictating conditions to France and Spain, scarcely made an effort for the Catalans. The truth really is that Bolingbroke, in his anxiety to conclude the treaty with France, almost entirely overlooked the position in which this unfortunate people would

be left. The few English soldiers who remained in the Peninsula were withdrawn after the suspension of arms; and the instructions furnished to Lexington amounted to nothing more than to intercede with his Catholic Majesty on behalf of his revolted subjects. The Emperor, now standing single-handed against France, was utterly powerless to execute the work which had been neglected by the English. He was compelled to draw together his resources from every quarter; and Staremberg, after an abortive attempt to make conditions with Philip, embarked his force on some British vessels towards the end of July. Yet the spirit of the people thus abandoned rose to enthusiasm. With one voice the hundred members who composed the Council of Barcelona resolved to continue the war in the name of King Charles. To the Duke of Popoli, who demanded admittance for the troops of King Philip, a peremptory refusal was returned. Thousands of zealous hands set to work to repair the fortifications of Cardena and Barcelona, and a black flag was hoisted on the Castle of Monjuich bearing the inscription, "Death, or our privileges maintained!" The Catalans had plenty of time to prepare for defence; for Philip's army was, by itself, utterly unable to attack any strong city; and Louis was anxious to arrive at some settlement with the Emperor before sending troops to the aid of his grandson.

In the spring of this year, however, it became known in England that orders had been issued to Berwick to march with fifty thousand men into Catalonia; and much sympathy, not unmixed with a sense of national shame, was felt for the too certain fate that awaited the inhabitants. Sunderland and Wharton, Cowper and Halifax, expressed in strong terms their indignation at the conduct of the Ministers. The House, they insisted, ought to inquire strictly how this poor people came to be abandoned after being drawn in to declare for the Emperor. Bolingbroke replied that the Queen had done her utmost to preserve to the Catalans their ancient privileges. Her engagements, however, with those allies, he contended, subsisted no longer than while Charles remained in Spain. As soon as he chose to retire from the country, her Majesty could do no more than employ her good offices with the King. The Whig lords were of course not satisfied with this answer. God Almighty,

they urged, had put more effectual means in her hands than her Ministers had employed. Yet it must have occurred to them that the mischief, however easily it might once have been averted, was now beyond remedy. They were forced to content themselves with an address to the Queen, praying her to continue her interpositions on behalf of the Catalans.*

The debate on the state of the nation was then resumed. Several vehement harangues were made upon the dangers to which Europe in general, and the Protestant succession in particular, were left exposed by the conduct of the Ministers. "I was assured not many weeks since," said Sunderland, "by the Minister of the Duke of Lorraine, that, notwithstanding the earnest applications made last session by both Houses for the removal of the Pretender, no instances had yet been made to his master for that purpose." "The same gentleman," added Halifax, "told me as much only four days ago." After these allegations the Whigs ventured to divide the House upon the question whether the Protestant succession was in danger under the present Administration. A battle commenced which raged over a wide field. As every Whig felt himself at liberty to arraign the Ministers upon every measure since their accession to power, the contest was protracted for seven hours. Oxford and Bolingbroke had the mortification of seeing several of their ablest supporters turn against them. Anglesea made a public atonement for the part he had taken in politics. He could not doubt, he said, after hearing the statements of so many persons of undoubted honour, statements which the Ministers did not even attempt to confute, that the Protestant succession was indeed in danger. "I own," he continued, "that I gave my consent to the cessation of arms, for which I take shame to myself, and ask of God, my country, and my conscience pardon. Yet that fault would never have been committed had the Council not been assured by a noble lord that the peace would be glorious and advantageous both to her Majesty and her allies." Oxford tried to defend himself against this attack. The peace, he asseverated, was as glorious and advantageous as could be expected, considering the necessity of affairs and the opposition which the Queen's Ministers encoun-

* Parliamentary History; Lettres Historiques.

tered both at home and abroad. But the unhappy Treasurer, slow in thought, ungraceful in manner, and unblessed with fluency of speech, was at once borne down by the vehement tide of Whig oratory. Never, it was thrown back at him, had Ministers such an opportunity of making an honourable peace as had those of the Queen. "When I lately crossed and re-crossed France," exclaimed Argyle, "I beheld the marks of desolation all around me. I rode forty miles without seeing a man fit to bear arms. The people were in the extremity of want. Where could have been the necessity of concluding peace so precipitately with a prince whose dominions were exhausted of men, money, and provisions?" The disbanding of regiments out of their turn, the removal of a multitude of officers signalised by their attachment to the House of Hanover, afforded, the Duke went on to say, a clear indication of what designs were in hand.

In spite, however, of all that the Whigs could urge, the Ministers carried the day by sheer weight of numbers. Yet their assailants had the consolation of perceiving the majority against them now reduced by desertions to twelve only; and in high spirits they began a fresh attack. No sooner had the last decision been reported, than Halifax moved that another address should be presented to the Queen to renew her instances to the Court of Lorraine for the removal of the Pretender. The motion was received with enthusiasm by his party. The blood of the Whigs was heated by conflict. In their eagerness to flourish in the faces of their opponents their zeal for the House of Hanover, they forgot all considerations of respect and decency for their existing sovereign. They forgot that the Pretender and Anne were the children of one father. They forgot even that they were English gentlemen. Wharton proposed that a clause should be added to the address desiring her Majesty to issue a proclamation offering a reward to any one who should apprehend the Pretender alive or dead. The Duke of Bolton moved as a further amendment that the reward should be suitable to the importance of the service. No one rose to offer opposition, and amid loud cries of "Adjourn! adjourn!" from the Tories, the question was put and carried.

Three days afterwards, when the House again assembled, the

Whigs had grown calmer. The address, with its horrible additions, was reported, and Lord North and Grey then ventured to point out that in this form it was a direct encouragement to assassins. To set a reward upon any man's head, he said nobly, was a practice repugnant to Christianity and inconsistent with the honour and dignity of a nation hitherto renowned for its clemency. He was followed in the same strain by Trevor, who declared himself so fully satisfied that such proclamations were antagonistic to our laws, that were any man, who had been tempted by them to commit homicide, brought before him as a judge, he should not hesitate to pronounce him guilty of murder. He moved that the reward should be confined to apprehending the Pretender in case he should land or attempt to land in Great Britain or Ireland, and that it should be left to her Majesty's discretion when to issue the proclamation. This motion was, after some resistance, carried. Cowper and Halifax were among the dissentients, and scarcely raised their characters in the eyes of posterity by contending that the practice, however persons might now recoil from it, was systematically followed by a nation so civilised as the ancient Romans, and was not unknown even in England. James II. had afforded a precedent in setting a price on the head of his nephew, Monmouth. It was noticed that the bishops were absent on this occasion. As the preponderance of them were zealous Whigs, it may not be unfair to presume that the address, as originally drawn, met with their approval; but that the same ecclesiastical delicacy which prevented inquisitors from signing death-warrants, prompted the English bishops to step aside while a deed of blood was being done by profane hands for the advantage of religion.

Even in the harmless form, however, to which the address had now been reduced, it not unnaturally gave offence to Anne. This was the third time the Whigs had teased her to take measures which they well knew were most unpalatable to her. What had she done that these men should labour so pertinaciously to bring her under the suspicion of her subjects? Had she omitted any opportunity of assuring them that the crown should descend in the manner which the Parliament had marked out? It seemed as if nothing would satisfy these tyrants unless

she showed herself to be totally devoid of all natural feeling, unless she hunted out of every asylum in Europe a young man whose innocence and misfortunes would have moved the compassion of any other mortals but Whigs, unless she invited into her kingdom a German prince who, while impatiently expecting her dissolution, would enjoy a kind of rival sovereignty by becoming the rallying-point of bad men, atheists, and republicans, enemies of the Church, and scorners of the divine doctrine of hereditary right. She answered the deputation who came with the address, that she could not see any necessity at present for such a proclamation: she would issue it if a necessity arose. "I think," she added sharply, "the best way of strengthening the Protestant succession would be to bring to a close the groundless fears and jealousies which are so industriously promoted."

That same day the leading Whigs, at a consultation held beneath the roof of Halifax, formed a new project. To get some member of the Hanoverian family into the kingdom was regarded by the whole party as a point absolutely essential to the Protestant succession. Yet it was almost beyond hope that an invitation to any member of that family could be wrung from Anne either by violence or persuasion. There was a way, however, by which the Electoral Prince might come over without committing any offence which the sovereign could publicly resent. He had been created Duke of Cambridge. He was consequently a peer of the realm, and as such entitled to the usual writ of summons to Parliament. Schutz, who was present at the meeting, undertook to call upon the Chancellor, and make the demand in the Prince's name. He accordingly waited upon Harcourt. That personage, taken completely by surprise, was in great perplexity how to answer his visitor. He objected faintly that it was not customary to issue writs to peers out of the kingdom. He was careful, however, to impress upon the envoy that he did not refuse compliance with his request. He only thought it proper first to communicate with the Queen. The anger and terror which struggled in the breast of the poor lady when this new stratagem of the enemy was announced to her, may well be imagined. A Cabinet Council was forthwith held. There appeared no good reason

for refusing the request, and the Chancellor was therefore instructed to issue it at once. The master of the ceremonies waited, however, upon Schutz, and intimated to him that the Queen's displeasure had been so much aroused by his making such a demand without previously acquainting her with his orders upon the subject, that she declined to receive him into her presence again. This was the sole result of this ill-considered manœuvre. Schutz, an enthusiast, who participated in all the wild fears and schemes of the Whigs, had not only acted without orders from his Court, but even in direct contravention of what he knew to be the pleasure of his master. George had plainly declared, both to him and his friends in England, that without a formal invitation from the sovereign, neither he nor any member of his family would set foot in the country.*

The first effect, however, of Schutz's application for the writ was to inspire the Whigs with fresh anticipations of triumph, and to increase their numbers by some peers who were wavering between their duty to or their hopes from the dynasty that was going out, and the dynasty that was coming in. As her Majesty's answer to the address about the Pretender was thought scarcely satisfactory, it was determined to move for a new address, which, under the pretext of thanking her for her answer to the former one, should set forth the reasons which had induced the House to present it. The Ministers strove their utmost to limit this new emanation of Whiggism to a mere recapitulation of her Majesty's words. The division of Members present actually proved equal. Sixty-one peers voted on each side. A majority of two proxies gave a bare victory to the Tories.

It was indeed time to distinguish by some definitive test who were for and who were against the Ministers, and a motion soon afterwards brought forward in the House of Commons seems to have been specially designed with this object. On the 15th of April Sir Edward Knatchbull, a Tory, and one of the Members for Kent, introduced the subject of the Protestant succession; and the question was put in committee whether it

* Macpherson, Hanover Papers; Bolingbroke to Strafford, April 23, May 4.

was in danger under her Majesty's Government. Hanmer, the Speaker, supported the Whigs, and the division which followed showed that Hanmer was not the only Tory who had conceived suspicions of the Ministers. Two hundred and eight Members against two hundred and fifty-six showed that the majority in favour of the Ministers was suffering diminution.

CHAPTER XV.

It was an object of first importance to the Ministers to secure a Parliamentary approval of their treaties of peace before that day should arrive—which seemed now to be approaching fast—when a hostile sovereign would leave them to the mercy of their enemies. The precarious state of the Queen's health, and the desertions that had commenced from their ranks, warned them to delay this measure no longer. The nobleman who undertook to move for the desired address was the Earl of Clarendon. As Lord Cornbury he had more than a quarter of a century before distinguished himself as the first English officer who openly betrayed the trust reposed in him by his sovereign, and who set the example of deserting to the camp of the invader. Since that time he had been during six years Governor of New York, and had in that capacity also done things which deserve commemoration. He was one of the first of a series of aristocratic imbeciles who widened the breach between England and her colonies, and who did more by his actions than any Transatlantic demagogue could have done by arguments to convince the Americans of the necessity of their taking up arms to preserve their dignity and freedom.* Such was the peer who now moved for an address of thanks to her Majesty for having by a safe, honourable, and advantageous peace, delivered these nations from a long and consuming land war. The Whigs stood aghast at the impudence of the proposal. "My lords," exclaimed Cowper, "this is the most barefaced attempt that was ever made by a Ministry to secure themselves by obtaining the approval of the House for what they have done." "I know of nothing in our history resembling it," observed Nottingham,

* In a letter from Bothmar to Robethon, June 4—15, 1714, it is stated that he thought it necessary for him as representing the Queen to dress like a woman.

"except an address of thanks which was procured by the Duke of Suffolk in the reign of Henry VI. to shield himself from the consequences of having betrayed the interests of his country in a treaty he had made with France. But this man was afterwards called to an account notwithstanding, and I say no more of him because he came to an untimely end." Whig eloquence appears to have shown with special brilliancy in the debate which ensued. Halifax endeavoured to kindle indignation in the Tory peers by dwelling upon the anguish which must have torn the bosom of that true Englishman, the Duke of Ormond, when he received those shocking orders which compelled him to restrain the glorious ardour of his soldiers. Burnet tried to work upon his hearers by logic. "No law or reason," he argued, "can be given for one ally disengaging himself from his partners without acquainting them first that he had done his *ultimus conatus*, and that to proceed further would be to him *certa pernicies*." "But that," retorted his brother-bishop, the late plenipotentiary, "was our own case. We had, in fact, arrived at our *ultimus conatus*, and for aught I know, to proceed further would have been for us *certa pernicies*." "From what I can gather," observed Wharton, "this is the *ultimus conatus* of the Ministers; and if they fail to carry this address, it will be to them *certa pernicies*." Against this raging sea of argument, indignation, and sarcasm, however, the Tories stood their ground as immovable and, as far as any record remains, as silent as rocks. They were able to count eighty-two votes against sixty-nine, and the address, as worded in Clarendon's motion, was sent down to the Commons for their concurrence.*

This concurrence, from the great preponderance of the Tories in the Lower House, there could be no difficulty in obtaining. But the Ministers, especially Bolingbroke, had been greatly irritated by the random reflections and misrepresentations which the Whigs had thrown out with regard to their conduct. It was their desire to set themselves right with the public. Two documents were accordingly laid upon the table of the Commons. One of these, which bears marks of being drawn by Bolingbroke himself, gave a brief history of the negotiations with France. If, it was contended, there were

* Parliamentary History.

any points in the treaties which fell short of what people might reasonably expect, those persons were solely to blame who had multiplied obstructions in the way of the Ministers while the negotiations were in progress. This was the argument invariably put forward by the Ministers and their apologists to justify the acceptance of terms which, both in that age and for many subsequent generations, were considered as being far below what England was in a position to claim on behalf of herself and her allies. Yet such reasoning could satisfy only those Tories who, in their determination to disagree with the Whigs, were not disposed to criticize the actions of the Ministers. If one ally will persist in carrying on negotiations for peace on a footing held to be totally inadmissible by all his partners, he must expect that obstructions will be thrown in his way. An ally, moreover, who, just at the moment when the common enemy is believed to be on the point of surrendering at discretion, suddenly withdraws from the war, will be justly censured to the very end of time if the peace afterwards made turns out to be less advantageous and glorious than people had hoped for.

The second document was one of great value, and well calculated to have its effect on the minds of that large class of persons who measure the prosperity of a nation by its accumulation of gold and silver, and who could not hear of the heap diminishing without raising a cry that the country was on the road to ruin. From this document it appeared that the annual payments on account of the army, which, at the outbreak of the war, did not much exceed seventeen hundred thousand pounds, gradually increased until the year 1710, when the payments were four millions and a quarter. The total cost of both army and navy from October, 1701, to the end of September, 1713, reached nearly sixty-six millions. It was computed that eleven hundred thousand a year sufficed to maintain army and navy in time of peace. If then a sum of thirteen millions, representing the ordinary expenses for a period of twelve years, be deducted from the sixty-six millions of actual disbursements, the conclusion is reached that the cost to the country of the war of the Spanish succession was fifty-three millions.*

* The Report is printed in Somers's Tracts.

Much vehement criticism was expended on the treaty of commerce with Spain. But the Whigs judged it hopeless to attempt a division; and the address of thanks for the peace was presented by both Houses. Further to strengthen the security of her Ministers, Anne, in acknowledging the address, referred to it as the united voice of her affectionate and loyal subjects.

Common fears for the future had induced Oxford and Bolingbroke to combine in raising this necessary barrier against the vengeance which the Whigs would be certain to demand as soon as the Hanoverian was on the throne. But it was the last time they acted in concert. Their old friendship, if any feeling approaching that name ever existed between two such natures, was now entirely at an end. From the first they had held dissimilar views as to the line of policy it behoved them to pursue. Oxford, perfectly contented with having driven the Marlborough party from its monopoly of power, and seeing very few Tories qualified by abilities and experience to take part in the government of the country, had been inclined to accept the aid of such Whigs who would cheerfully coalesce with him and submit to consider him their chief. Bolingbroke had regarded any such compromise as the height of folly. It was to his judgment unaccountable that when a vast majority of the landowners of England, great and small, were Tories, when eighty clergymen out of every hundred might be depended upon for instilling Tory principles into the hearts of their congregations, when three-fourths of the members of the House of Commons and half the Peers were on the side of the Government, and when a sovereign was on the throne who held Whiggish doctrines in horror, any Minister should think it necessary, or even prudent, to pay court to a party which, however brilliantly composed, was still but a small and unpopular minority of the nation. The consequences of this policy he prophesied would be that many influential Tories, whose reasonable claims to office were disregarded, would fall away into opposition, while the administration would disappoint that great mass which looked to be gratified by some cruel bill against the Dissenters. But Oxford would not be warned. More than three years had passed, and still no radical measures

had been taken against the Whigs. The lords-lieutenants, the justices of the peace appointed in the time of Godolphin, had not been changed; the country remained to a great extent in Whig hands. Bolingbroke's predictions were being verified. The Tories were dropping away from the side of the Ministers; the Whigs were recovering their old ascendency. The Queen was evidently sinking into her grave. There was not a moment to be lost. If the demise occurred before the entire Government was in Tory hands, the least that Ministers could apprehend was to be driven at once and for ever from power. Bolingbroke, young, vigorous, and ambitious, was determined not to submit to such a fate without at least an effort to avert it. He roused all his genius to fling from him the dawdling politician who was content to wait till ruin overtook the whole party. A strong suspicion that Oxford was acting the part of a traitor had taken possession of his mind. That his colleague was capable of treachery of the meanest kind he had felt convinced ever since his disappointment in the matter of the peerage. He could not imagine why he should neglect measures so obvious, so essentially necessary to the safety of himself and others, except upon the supposition that he was trying to make a private peace for himself with the future sovereign and the Whigs. Oxford, on his part, seems to have suspected that Bolingbroke's anxiety to make a clean sweep of the Whigs from the civil, military, and naval services of the country arose from some mad design of restoring the Pretender.* Between two men of frank characters an explanation might have ensued which would have restored mutual confidence. But it was not in Oxford's nature to be open, nor in Bolingbroke's to conceal the contempt he felt for Oxford. It was in vain that mutual friends expostulated, exhorted, and devised stratagems for bringing the pair together. Swift prided himself upon his ingenuity in having once put them in a coach together without other company, persuaded that an understanding would surely be arrived at during a four-hours' journey to Windsor.† But he was disappointed. There could, in fact, be no understand-

* Compare Bolingbroke's correspondence with Oxford's letter to the Queen, June 9, 1714; Cadogan to Bothmar, May 7—18, and several other letters in the Macpherson Papers.

† Inquiry into the Queen's Last Ministry; Macpherson Papers.

ing between daring and energy on the one side and timidity and distrust on the other. Bolingbroke would be satisfied only with a crusade against the Whigs; and Oxford, in addition to his terror of making enemies, was more than half suspicious that his colleague was bent on entrapping him into some treasonable scheme.

Under these circumstances Bolingbroke determined to assume that leadership of the Tory party which Oxford had allowed to slip out of his hands. He had now many advantages over his partner. Time had done much to reverse the original position which the two statesmen occupied in the eyes of the public. Only three years before, the name of Harley had commanded almost universal respect. He was regarded as an excellent type of what an English gentleman ought to be, moral, grave, learned, and supremely attached to the Church of England. It had been expected that under his auspices a new era would commence, when Dissenters would be prevented by orthodox and pious magistrates from encroaching on the spiritual domains of the Church, and when standing armies, stockjobbing, and such like unseemly innovations on the good old times, would be vigorously put down. The Queen looked upon him from much the same point of view as her people. A man so decorous and so wise in appearance was the proper repository of the confidence of a decorous and pious sovereign. His popularity reached its zenith after Guiscard's attempt on his life, and from that period it began to decline. The nation waited in vain for bills to protect the Church. The crowd of rustic squires in Parliament waited in vain for permission to occupy the places of authority still held by Whigs. The result of Oxford's timorous policy was, therefore, that by the close of 1713 he found himself with scarcely a single political supporter. One ally, whose services had once been of inestimable advantage to him, and whose opportunities to befriend or injure were still great, he had wholly alienated. For some cause, which rumour whispered was disappointment about the Assiento contract, Lady Masham had conceived a spite against her cousin, and was fond of showing her contempt of him before company. On the other hand, the commanding talents of Bolingbroke had raised him to the highest place in the estimation of the Tory party, and it

was to him that men now looked for the measures they had been so long expecting.

The effect of his determination was speedily shown. On the 12th of May a motion was made in the House of Commons by Sir William Wyndham, one of Bolingbroke's most intimate friends, for leave to bring in a bill to prevent the growth of schism, and for the further security of the Church of England. The bill was suffered to pass without impediment through the first stages; but at the third reading the Whigs mustered all their strength to defend that oppressed section of their countrymen who looked to them for protection. The object of the bill was to revive and confirm a tyrannical clause in the Act of Uniformity, which precluded schoolmasters and tutors from giving instruction without previously subscribing a declaration of conformity with the Established Church. The Toleration Act had contained nothing to abrogate this restriction on education. But during that long period when Whig influence predominated in the Parliament the operation of the law had been virtually suspended, and many of the youth of England had been notoriously brought up by divines whose principles shocked the consciences and aroused the indignation of orthodox believers. The bill before the House imposed severe penalties upon all tutors and schoolmasters who presumed to instruct without having first obtained a licence from a Bishop, which licence was not to be granted except upon production of a certificate that the applicant had received the sacrament in the form prescribed by the Church.

The bill was not inaptly compared by the Whigs for its cruelty and subtlety to the famous decree by which the Emperor Julian attempted to extinguish Christianity. The natural consequence of passing such a bill, Stanhope pointed out, would be to increase the tendency to foreign education. Two evils resulted from sending our youth abroad: it occasioned a drain of money from the kingdom; and the pupils came back full of prejudices against their native country. "When I consider the mischief which has been wrought among us by the English popish seminaries on the Continent," he went on to say, "I can only wish that, instead of making new laws which oblige Papists to send their sons out of the country for education, those already

in force were mitigated." To these arguments the Tories had nothing to urge beyond the usual commonplaces that the Dissenters were dangerous to the Church and the State, and that some parliamentary check ought to be provided against their encroachments. To show the lengths of impiety to which a nonconformist could go, William Collier, a Member of no exalted reputation, read aloud some extracts from a book lately published by the crazy minister Hickeringhill, until he came to a passage so blasphemous that the House would hear no more. The country gentlemen, however, who crowded the benches, and to whom a Dissenter was an abomination, had made up their minds about the bill; and the reasoning of Whig orators, which at the present time would appear as conclusive as could be, was lost upon them. They sent up the Schism Bill to the Lords by a majority of a hundred and eleven votes.

In this new arena the nearer equality between parties afforded some chance that the bill might be judged by its merits. In the pithy condensation by a hostile reporter of the speech in which Bolingbroke recommended it to the House may still be heard the faint echoes of that flow of impressive and dignified language so often, unhappily for his fame, exerted on the side of injustice, which seems to have been his principal characteristic as an orator. Anglesea, on a question affecting the interests of the Church, again showed himself on the Tory side, and argued that the Dissenters had shown themselves unworthy of the indulgence granted to them at the Revolution by their subsequent endeavours to engross the education of youth. It seems not to have occurred to him that to magnify the success of the Dissenters in this direction was equivalent to passing a censure upon the supineness of the Established clergy, who, with twenty times the pecuniary and political advantages enjoyed by their rivals, could allow education to pass from under their control. Wharton, in nearly the last speeches he was destined to utter, exerted all his powers of raillery against the main promoter of the bill. The early education of Bolingbroke by a Nonconformist minister, the notorious libertinism of his subsequent conduct, afforded indeed abundant materials for ridicule. It was an agreeable surprise, he remarked, to see some men of pleasure grown on a sudden so religious as to set

up for patrons of the Church. He could not but wonder, however, that those who had received their training in Dissenting academies should be so eager to suppress them. They should remember the debt of gratitude the public owed to the schools which had bred the great men who had made such glorious treaties of peace and obtained such advantages for British commerce. Although he had heard many laws mentioned in the course of the debate, he said in a subsequent speech, he had expected that the Bishops would have reminded the House of one law which was above all others, to "do unto others as we would they should do unto us." Cowper, Halifax, and Townshend all opposed the bill on different grounds. Cowper pointed out, that as in many of the country towns the elementary schools for reading and writing were chiefly supported by the Dissenters, the suppression of those schools would lead to the suppression of education altogether, and even the reading of the Holy Scriptures. Halifax dwelt upon the cruelty and inexpediency of persecuting the industrious French refugees who had settled in the country. Nottingham, it might have been expected, would have returned, like Anglesea, to his former party on a debate of this nature; but, to the general surprise, he spoke energetically against the bill. He had been, he owned, for the bill against occasional conformity; but now that the Church had gained that security he considered her safe, and felt himself bound in conscience to oppose a barbarous law which deprived parents of their natural right to educate their own children.

As the bill passed through committee, the Whigs succeeded in introducing several alterations and additions which deprived it of much of its virulence. Teachers who merely taught reading, writing, arithmetic, the art of navigation, or any mechanical art were excepted from its provisions. The power of convicting offenders was also taken from the justices of the peace and lodged in the superior courts. On the other hand, Anglesea procured the extension of the bill to Ireland, where perhaps three-fourths of the Protestant population were Dissenters of one sect or another. One exquisitely absurd clause was adopted, we know not on what grounds nor upon whose motion, which excepted from the scope of the bill the tutors employed in the families of noblemen. Stanhope, when the bill

thus amended was returned, tried but unsuccessfully to obtain a similar exception for tutors employed by members of the House of Commons.*

The bill eventually passed, but not without a protest signed by thirty-three Peers. The reader will perhaps consider the promoter of this cruel and crafty attempt to suppress Dissent more deserving of reprobation than the authors of the worst persecuting Acts of previous ages. We must estimate the degree of criminality in a man's actions by the light he possesses, and which is enjoyed by the society in which he mixes. There is no moral rule by which Torquemada or Ferdinand II. can be condemned as bad men. They seem to have thoroughly believed in the truth of those dogmas for denying which they tortured and slew so many thousands of their fellow-creatures. They were convinced that, unless they could extirpate heresy, the people they had in charge would be the prey of distraction in this world and become the portion of Satan in the next. Men thus impressed naturally made use of all the powers that Providence had placed in their hands: they felt it their bounden duty to do so. If the sufferings of a few could be the means of saving the souls of myriads, pity itself may have steeled their hearts against pity. But the intellectual darkness which led to persecution in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had turned to broad daylight in the eighteenth. Bolingbroke lived in a scientific and polite age, and was himself, as regards matters of religion, a philosopher such as, even in the present day, would be considered as belonging to a somewhat advanced school. No man despised more than he the people who could find pleasure in persecuting for theological differences. He looked down upon the herd of Tories who raged against the Dissenters with the same contempt as Pilate from his judgment seat looked down upon the ignorant superstitious rabble who were clamouring for the blood of Jesus. Yet to gain the applause of the multitude he was willing to pander to their passions, and deliver up to their fury a large, innocent, and valuable section of his countrymen. He had another motive in introducing this bill besides raising himself in the estimation of the Tory party. He knew that it

* Parliamentary History; Lettres Historiques; Oldmixon.

would reduce his colleague, Oxford, to a dilemma. The Treasurer had never ceased to dally with the Whigs, but was afraid to take any open measure which would cost him the confidence of the Tories. But it was impossible to handle such a touchstone as the Schism Bill without declaring for one party or the other. If he voted for it, all hopes of making his peace with the Whigs would be at an end; if he voted against it, the Tories would certainly regard him as an apostate. Under these circumstances he endeavoured to steer a middle course which led him still further into general contempt. Being challenged in the House for his opinion, he replied that he had not yet sufficiently considered the bill. When he had, he would vote according as it should appear to him for the good or the detriment of the country. He did not fulfil his promise, but absented himself during the subsequent debates and divisions to which the bill gave rise.

There is great comfort in reflecting that this terrific piece of legislation was never enforced. The time appointed for its coming into operation was the 1st of August, the very day upon which the Queen died. The Government which succeeded her was not one disposed to the persecution of Dissenters; and the Act, having remained a dead letter during four years, was then repealed. Yet it remains an ineffaceable stain on the character of a Minister who, for brilliancy of intellect, has not been surpassed except by Bacon.

Upon the same day that leave was granted to Wyndham to introduce his bill for the prevention of schism, permission was obtained by George Lockhart for the introduction of a measure which fairly illustrates that utter blindness to facts and recklessness of consequences which were characteristics of the Jacobitical party. It was a bill to authorise her Majesty to resume the revenues of those benefices in Scotland which the Episcopalian clergy had forfeited at the time of the Revolution by refusing to take the oath of allegiance, and which had since been enjoyed by Presbyterian ministers, in order that the same revenues might in future be attributed to the support of Episcopalian clergymen. That the object of the promoters of this bill was to strengthen the Jacobite interest in Scotland no one could for a moment doubt: but no one who had the least acquaintance

with Scottish affairs ought to have failed to perceive how unlikely the measure was to conduce to the ends proposed. The inclinations of the Episcopalian clergy for the restoration of the Pretender were indeed notorious; but they were an insignificant knot of men, without influence, hated and despised by the Presbyterians who formed the great bulk of the nation. Men thus situated could have rendered but little service to their cause, while the effect of showing favour to them would have impressed upon the Presbyterians, many of whom perhaps wavered between the Stuarts and Hanoverians, the sort of legislation they must expect if the Pretender recovered the throne. The Whigs affected to believe that the bill would have the support of a Jacobite ministry; but they had never less cause for alarm. However anxious Bolingbroke may have been to conciliate Tories of all descriptions, English, Scottish, Irish, Jacobites, Hanoverians, Episcopalians, he had no desire to provoke a great outbreak of indignation in Scotland. He hastened to the Queen, and obtained her promise to refuse her assent to such a bill if it succeeded in passing the Houses. As soon as this became known the fate of the measure was sealed. It was coldly received, and, upon a proposition from a Whig Member to limit its application to such Episcopalian clergymen only as would pray for her Majesty and the Princess Sophia, was quietly suffered to drop.*

While the Tories were taking advantage of their interval of power to oppress the Dissenters, Schutz, forbidden the Court for presuming to embarrass the Queen and her Ministers, was posting to Hanover. He bore with him the writ summoning the Electoral Prince to take his seat in Parliament and numerous letters from his Whig friends entreating that his Highness might be allowed to sail forthwith for England. He found the little Court still divided by the old domestic feuds. The immediate heir to the English crown, the dowager Electress Sophia, was so far alive to decorum as to maintain carefully the appearances of being on friendly terms with her son, the reigning Elector; but her views as to the policy it behoved them all

* Lockhart's Memoirs. The origin of this bill was that Lockhart and his friends, finding that the Ministers would do nothing to facilitate the succession of the Pretender, determined to do something for themselves.

to pursue differed essentially from his.* The gloomy prognostications which the Whigs drew from the mysterious conduct of the English Ministers alarmed her greatly. She had the assurance of Marlborough that, if her grandson would but make his appearance in the country, arrangements were already made for proposing to Parliament a settlement upon him of forty thousand a year. He would be required to do nothing but make his court to the Queen, to caress the Ministers, and to abstain from meddling with political affairs, and by so acting would insure the succession without risk, without expense, and without war.† Influenced by these considerations the Electress was supremely anxious for the departure of the Prince. The controlling authority in Hanover continued, however, to place a steady and persistent veto on the expedition. The aged Princess could make nothing of the obstinate sluggishness, as she deemed it, of her son; and the fever of impatience into which it threw her was in reality hurrying her towards her grave. Although arrived at the great age of eighty-three years, this descendant of James I. had all the ambition of youth. To die before she had once signed her name as Queen of Great Britain was a contingency of which the energetic and aspiring old lady could not think without pain. It seems indeed not a little remarkable that George should have disregarded advice so urgently and repeatedly given him by parties whom he must have considered competent judges of the situation. Yet no representations or entreaties could move him to take the smallest step to preserve those claims of his family which were supposed to be imperilled. It was once impressed upon him that a few trifling pensions would secure the votes of all the Scottish representatives in Parliament, and that a small sum would convert every scribbler for hereditary right into a warm partisan for the Protestant succession.‡ Yet not a farthing would he devote to such purposes. Sometimes the Whigs imputed his conduct to want of ambition, and sometimes to stinginess; and both sluggishness of disposition and love of money, of which he had no great store, afford a probable explanation of much that seems extraordinary in his behaviour. His partiality to the Whigs and his aversion

* Molyneux to Marlborough, June 9. † Marlborough to Robethon, May 5.
‡ Macpherson, Hanover Papers.

for the Tories appear to have arisen rather from the views of the former party coinciding with his own on the subject of continental politics, than from any gratitude for the zeal they evinced to preserve the rights of his family to the succession.

In reality, however, George was anxious that some member of his family should proceed to England provided the Queen could be brought to acquiesce in such an arrangement. But he differed from his mother in his prudent determination to take no measure which would give offence to her Majesty. The strong affection borne to Anne by all classes of her subjects was well known to him; and he doubtless reflected that the least hint from her would render a stranger to the last degree unpopular, and might even put in still greater danger the succession that stranger came to insure. To Thomas Harley, who had been instructed to demand whether he had any fresh Parliamentary securities to suggest, he replied in the negative; but he sent back the envoy with a memorial on behalf of himself and his mother in which the influence of his Whig advisers might be traced in every passage. The expediency of removing the Pretender from Lorraine was urged in courteous but firm language. His adherents, it was added for the information of her Majesty, gave out with the utmost assurance that they were preparing a descent on Scotland while that kingdom was undefended by a fleet and land forces, and that their efforts would be seconded by powerful support from the Continent. Their Electoral Highnesses hoped that, in this dangerous condition of affairs, her Majesty would be impressed with the necessity of settling in the kingdom some member of the Electoral family—a measure which could not but conduce to her own safety, the safety of the nation and of the Protestant religion. Whoever that person might be, it would be his first object, by fidelity and inviolable attachment to herself, to show the respect and gratitude of their Electoral Highnesses.*

From the language of this memorial it was evident that George had no intention of sending over his son without an express invitation from the Queen. But the air was full of rumours, set in circulation by the Whigs and repeated by Tories, that the Prince was on the point of embarking for England.

* Macpherson Papers. The memorial is dated May 7.

Anne, whose faculties had become morbidly sensitive through illness, fell into a paroxysm of rage and terror. To see the Prince approaching her throne was to her imagination as a visit from Death himself. Three letters to the Electress, the Elector, and the Electoral Prince were sent off to Hanover as fast as a courier could convey them. They were all couched in terms such as a haughty and irritated superior might address to a dependant. The Electress was warned that any attempt to establish a prince of the Hanoverian family in the kingdom during the lifetime of the reigning sovereign might entail consequences fatal to the succession of the crown in that family. There were only too many spirits in the country already eager to promote sedition, and it was impossible to predict what might happen if any step were taken to impair the royal authority. In her letter to the Elector, Anne declared herself unable to imagine how a prince of his knowledge and penetration could think of infringing upon her sovereignty. "I am firmly persuaded," the epistle ran, "you would not suffer the smallest diminution of your authority. I am no less sensitive about mine; and I am determined to oppose any project which may interfere with it, however fatal the consequences may be."*

These letters, written on the 19th of May (old style), were delivered at the Court of Hanover on the 26th of the same month. The aged Electress was greatly disturbed by their contents. During three hours of that summer night she paced up and down the walks of Herrenhausen, descanting upon her affairs to an Irish gentleman named Molyneux, who was on a visit to the Court with letters of introduction from Marlborough. The next day she was unable to leave her bed; but Molyneux was summoned to her chamber and entrusted with the Queen's letters, that copies might be made of them and transmitted to friends in England. Her health appeared perfectly restored on the following morning. She dressed and dined with the Elector according to her usual custom, and despatched Molyneux into the town to fetch the copies which had been made. He returned to find the servants of the Electress in tears around the dead body of their mistress, who had just expired in

* These letters were made public, and are printed in Lamberty and Oldmixon.

one of the public walks of the park. She had been overtaken by a shower of rain, and in her efforts to reach shelter had perhaps burst a blood-vessel. It is very probable that Anne's peremptory refusal to allow the Electoral Prince to reside in England—a measure which, if she relied on Marlborough's opinion, she must have thought essential to the preservation of her rights—precipitated her death.* Yet her removal from the scene was not without some great advantages to the public. It left the Elector, now become the first in succession to the English throne, at much greater liberty to follow his own counsels; and it saved England from the inconvenience, and at this season the peril, of being ruled by a very aged sovereign, whose death would have been expected from day to day.

In replying to the violent upbraidings of Anne, George very earnestly deprecated any design of impairing the lustre of her authority. He referred, however, to the memorial he had sent for the reasons which had induced him to suggest the expediency of his son's being permitted to settle in England. His answer gave but little comfort to the failing Queen. Apprehensions that the Prince might be on his way to the country preyed incessantly upon her mind. It was decided to send Clarendon to the Electoral Court to remonstrate against any such project should it be really in contemplation. The selection of this nobleman was regarded by those who were intently watching the rivalry between Oxford and Bolingbroke as an indication that the influence of the latter was now prevailing in the royal counsels.† There are grounds for believing that Oxford, in his anxiety to propitiate the Whigs, went so far as to recommend the Queen to gratify the wishes of the Electoral family. If this be the case, it affords a complete explanation of the disfavour into which that Minister now fell. About a month before, he had requested permission to lay down his office; but the extreme difficulty of filling the post of Treasurer had deterred her Majesty from accepting his resignation.‡

* Molyneux to Marlborough, June 9.

† Bothmar to Robethon, June 4—15; Kreyenburg to Robethon, June 25, July 6.

‡ Oxford to the Queen, June 9—20. Swift could not comprehend the alteration of the Queen's behaviour to Oxford. I have made no use of the "Secret History of the White Staff," which Defoe wrote to excuse Oxford and blacken Bolingbroke, and which, I feel convinced, is an impudent piece of invention from one end to the other.

The notion that the presence of some member of the Electoral family was absolutely necessary to preserve the Protestant succession against the machinations of a Jacobite Ministry, had taken entire possession of the faculties of the Whigs. Their failure to move George to send over his son with or without the Queen's permission raised in them forebodings such as now appear ridiculous to the student who, viewing the ample amount of evidence before him, perceives how insignificant the Jacobite party in England really was, and how small was the inclination, and utterly inadequate were the means, of any of the Continental princes to support the cause of the Pretender. The Jacobites, as ignorant of their own weakness as the supporters of the Protestant succession of their overpowering strength, showed signs of elation. Neither about the pamphlets they published, nor the meetings they chose to hold, did the Government give itself much concern. Yet it seldom happened that six of the party met together in a tavern without attracting public attention. For the folly of that set which professed allegiance to James, and which consisted generally of Irish Papists, was incredible. A consultation was sure to end in an orgy, an orgy in a disturbance; and a mob would surround the house to throw mud and stones at the gentlemen who were so ostentatiously tossing off bumpers to the health of a Popish sovereign.* The frequency of these incidents engendered false reports as to the number and activity of the Jacobites, and kept the public mind in a chronic state of uneasiness. There had been recently some attempts in Ireland to enlist soldiers for the Pretender, and three men had been hanged for the crime. Two Irish officers, however, named Hugh and William Kelly, who had been so fortunate as to escape the gallows, proceeded with much impudence to carry on the business of recruiting in London. Accounts of what they were doing soon reached the attentive ear of Wharton. He lodged an information with Chief-Justice Parker, and the two brothers were hunted down, captured with five of their dupes, and thrown into prison. These signs of the restlessness of the Pretender's agents either irritated Anne or worked upon

* See an account in Oldmixon and Tindal of a Popish meeting at the Sun Tavern in the Strand.

her fears. On the 23rd of June men of all parties were surprised by the issue of the proclamation against the Pretender for which the Parliament had applied. If one account of what passed at the Council is to be trusted, Anne acted entirely upon her own impulses. When the members assembled she drew a paper from her pocket, ordered that it should be immediately published, and hastily left the chamber to prevent any discussion about its contents.*

The reward, however, promised to any one who apprehended the Pretender in case he landed in Great Britain, was no more than five thousand pounds. The Whigs were not a little disgusted to find that arch enemy who threatened destruction to the liberties and religion of England rated at such a trifle. Upon an address of thanks being moved in the Commons, a Member proposed to add a clause intimating the willingness of the House to assist her Majesty with a hundred thousand pounds as a further reward to the person who should execute so important a service, and the addition was carried after some objections on the score of its conveying a sort of reflection on the Queen. In the Lords a similar address was also moved, and gave occasion to the Whigs to repeat their solicitations that the Pretender should be removed from Lorraine. "Unhappy Princess!" exclaimed Wharton. "Will posterity believe that the great Queen who struck down the power of France and provided Spain with a king, whose very Ministers made the Emperor and States-General tremble—will posterity believe that she has now grown so feeble as to be unable to force a petty prince like the Duke of Lorraine to comply with a just request?"

The Lords had been so far impressed by the attempt of the brothers Kelly to enlist soldiers, as to insert a clause in their address entreating her Majesty to offer a reward for apprehending any person who enlisted men, or who suffered himself to be enlisted, in the service of the Pretender. To the surprise of those numerous Peers who considered Bolingbroke's Jacobitism as a matter upon which there could be no doubt, that nobleman, who had been absent during the first part of

* Carte's Memorandum Book in the Macpherson Stuart Papers; Iberville to Torcy, July 2. Mackintosh Collections.

the discussion, rose and intimated to the House that he could propose a more effectual way to secure the succession in the House of Hanover. "You should make it high treason," he continued, "to enlist or to be enlisted in the Pretender's service." The suggestion was adopted. A bill making it high treason to enlist her Majesty's subjects in the service of any foreign power without licence under the sign manual was brought in, passed through Committee, and was eventually made a law to continue in operation during three years.*

A day or two afterwards the House reverted to the consideration of the commercial relations with Spain which had been established by the recent treaty. That treaty, it was well understood, had been superintended through all its stages by Bolingbroke. During the negotiations he had not condescended to ask advice from any one who was practically acquainted with the principles of foreign commerce, except his friend Arthur Moore. The whole responsibility thus rested entirely upon him. The City was not long in pronouncing that the Spaniards had taken advantage of his ignorance and presumption. According to the treaty as first made at Utrecht the duties payable on merchandise imported into Spain and her colonies were to have been the same as in the time of his Spanish Majesty Charles II. This arrangement, however, Bolingbroke had permitted the Spanish government to supersede by adding three explanatory articles which provided, in lieu of the tariff of Charles II., a uniform duty upon all merchandise of ten per cent. As soon as it became known that this alteration of the treaty had been ratified by the Queen the City raised an outcry, and the Whigs seized with avidity upon an occasion of proving to the nation that those who conducted its most important affairs knew nothing of the business they undertook.

On the 2nd of July a number of merchants engaged in the Spanish trade were in attendance, and it was moved, after some sharp reflections had been passed upon the explanatory articles, that they should be admitted to give their evidence. This motion Bolingbroke tried strenuously to frustrate; but the majority was against him, and conspicuous among his oppo-

* Parliamentary History; Lettres Historiques.

nents was his own colleague, Oxford. Upwards of thirty merchants were then examined, and deposed unanimously that, unless the articles were rescinded, trade with Spain could not be carried on except at a loss of twenty to twenty-five per cent. Moved by this evidence, the Lords applied to the Queen for the papers relating to the treaty, and begged her to acquaint them with the names of those persons who had advised the ratification of the three articles.

Anne only returned for reply that, being given to understand that the three explanatory articles were not detrimental to trade, she had consented to their being ratified along with the treaty. This answer, evading the main purpose of the application, caused considerable irritation. "I cannot see what business we have in this House," Wharton broke out, "if so little regard is shown to our address." It was then agreed to represent to her Majesty the opinion of the House that the future trade with Spain would be attended with insuperable difficulties unless alterations were made in the treaty as it now stood. A resolution was also passed to continue the investigation of the subject on the following day, and a request was sent down to the Commons that such of its Members who were Commissioners of Trade might then be allowed to attend.

Upon the appearance of the Commissioners Wharton commenced the examination by grimly remarking that he did not doubt but one of the gentlemen would try to make out that the treaty was advantageous. This referred to Moore, who was among the number. It soon appeared that his brother-commissioners, aware of the unpopular character of the treaty, had made up their minds that he should be the scapegoat. One of them declared that all he knew of the treaty before it was ratified was derived from hearing it once read over to the Board by Moore, who, however, refused to leave a copy for the consideration of the members. To heighten the feeling against the unfortunate man, the secretary to the Commissioners volunteered a confession that Moore had shown him a letter addressed to himself by an agent of Spain, and in which it was intimated that he must not expect the annuity of two thousand louis d'or which had been promised him unless he procured the acceptance of the three explanatory articles. The Lords on the next day

endeavoured to discover who were the parties destined to profit by the quarter share of the Assiento contract which her Majesty had reserved for herself, but which had, since their remonstrances, been given up to the South-Sea Company; but this mystery baffled all investigation. It was not doubted that a censure would, at the next sitting, be passed on Moore, and that an application would be made to the Queen to direct his being prosecuted for bribery. The stockholders of the South-Sea Company had already condemned him for a breach of trust, and had turned him out of his directorship with as much ignominy as they could put in words. But Bolingbroke now thought it high time to put a stop to investigations carried on in a spirit so bitterly hostile to himself and his friends. He requested the intervention of Anne. The Commons had already passed the most important of the money bills, and he could see no use in prolonging the legislative functions of a Parliament which seemed bent on nothing but worrying and thwarting her Majesty's Ministers. On the 9th of July, accordingly, Anne proceeded to the House of Peers, and put an end to the session. Her speech, the last she was destined to deliver to the representatives of her subjects, was reproachful and almost angry in its tone. In the winter she hoped, she said, to meet them again, and to find them in a temper that would conduce to the real improvement of commerce and the advantages of peace. Her chief concern was to preserve to them and their posterity their religion and liberty: yet it was impossible that these desirable ends could be attained without a similar disposition on their parts,—unless they laid aside all groundless jealousies and showed the same regard for her just prerogatives as she had always shown for their rights.*

The prorogation of Parliament relieved Bolingbroke from the necessity of waging open war with his Whig tormentors. The perpetual contests in which he had been of late engaged had tasked severely even his vigorous and determined nature. "If my grooms did not lead a happier life than I have done this great while," he wrote to Swift a few days after the prorogation, "I am sure they would quit my service." † His pro-

* Parliamentary History; Lettres Historiques; Oldmixon; Tindal.
† Bolingbroke to Swift, July 13.

spects were indeed gloomy. Both those treaties of commerce, for which he considered himself entitled to the gratitude of the nation, had been condemned by the Parliament. In the last session a House of Commons, although composed of just such ignorant, fox-hunting, High Church squires as a Tory Minister could desire, had been fascinated by Whig arguments, and had declined to bear its part in carrying into effect his treaty with France. The House of Lords, and the unanimous voice of the merchants, had now declared his treaty with Spain disadvantageous and ruinous to the commercial interests of the country. The Prince, who must shortly become his master, had, it was but too evident, formed his estimate of him from the reports of merciless and unscrupulous enemies. From him he could expect neither sympathy nor protection. With the opening of the new reign the Whigs would pounce upon him like a hungry pack of hounds upon a hare. To be driven from power, to be impeached as a traitor to his country, to be imprisoned, banished,—these were the rewards to which he must look for his services. And that one feeble barrier that intervened between him and ruin was fast giving way. Anne was plainly sinking under a complication of diseases. Scarcely a month now elapsed without some fresh fit of indigestion, gout, or erysipelas spread consternation among her attendants.

But Bolingbroke was not the man to submit without a struggle. His design of filling every office of power and trust in the State with Tories had hitherto been thwarted by the timidity of Oxford. Yet much had been accomplished. Those colonels of the army who resented the dismissal of Marlborough, or who had rendered themselves conspicuous by their display of Whiggism, had been quietly deprived as occasion served, and their places had been supplied by men who were at least not so loud in parading their attachment to the House of Hanover. As Oxford declined in the royal favour, a greater degree of influence had necessarily drifted towards Bolingbroke. In the spring of this year an attempt was made to obtain the control of the City. Eleven Whigs had been chosen by the freemen of different wards to serve on the Common Council. On the pretext of some informality the elections were cancelled, and eleven Tories who had opposed them were substituted. There can be

little doubt that, had Anne survived for a few more years, very considerable changes would have been effected throughout the country. A vast machinery would have been at work to influence the elections; and George, upon ascending the throne, would have found himself confronted with a Tory Parliament, and compelled in consequence to leave matters in the hands of a Tory Ministry.

The Whigs proclaimed with one voice that the men whom the Ministry were gradually introducing to office were Jacobites, and that there was an organized design on foot to secure the succession of the Pretender. Beyond their own asseverations, the evidence in support of this accusation is slight indeed.* The opinion of Swift that there were not five hundred persons of all ranks in England, exclusive of Papists and Nonjurors, who had any inclination for the Pretender, and that of those there were not six of any note, seems to err only in being too high an estimate of the Jacobite party.† All the evidence which has since come to light warrants us in believing the party to have been utterly insignificant. Many persons of high rank and influence chose indeed to admit agents of the Pretender to secret interviews, and to speak of the exiled family in terms of affection calculated to impress their hearers with the belief that they were well disposed towards a Restoration.

* The evidence consists principally in letters from Gaultier and Iberville to Torcy containing accounts of what Oxford and Bolingbroke said to them in private with regard to the Pretender. The Ministers fostered a belief in these Jacobite agents that the Queen was in favour of her brother's succession. Torcy, utterly ignorant of our constitution, and accustomed to regard the will of the sovereign as everything, and the inclinations of the people as of no importance, could never comprehend why, if the Queen was of this mind, she did not at once procure the repeal of every law adverse to her brother and invite him into the kingdom. It is evident that he considered that the Ministers were only trying to delude the exiled family. The evidence of Lockhart's Memoirs shows that the Scotch Jacobites were of the same opinion as to the insincerity of Bolingbroke. My own conviction is that both Oxford and Bolingbroke regarded the restoration of the Stuarts as a scheme much too wild to be seriously entertained. Their objects in seeing their agents and assuring them of their attachment to the cause were the same as those of Marlborough—(1), to keep the party quiet and secure their interest; (2), to provide for their own safety if, by some extraordinary turn of the wheel of fortune, the Pretender should gain the day. Bolingbroke's joining the Pretender a year afterwards was the step of a desperate man. He had an insane thirst for power, and saw no prospect of regaining it with the Hanoverian on the throne. He considered, moreover, that his life was in danger through the implacability of the Whigs. He therefore attached himself openly to the Pretender as a last resource; but soon abandoned him upon finding that, under such a prince, success was hopeless.

† Inquiry into the Behaviour of the Queen's Last Ministry.

Marlborough and Godolphin adopted this course. It was continued by Oxford and Bolingbroke. But the utmost that the agents were able to extract from these professing penitents was florid expressions of sympathy, exhortations to patience, and advice that the Prince should change his religion.* As year after year passed by, the unfortunate Stuarts learned to put less and less faith in those who pretended to be their friends. Marlborough was given over as an incorrigible deceiver long before his power had declined. After three years of trial Oxford was judged as being no better worthy of credit. Berwick, who acted as general manager to the exiled family, states in his Memoirs that, being persuaded of the insincerity of the Treasurer, he caused a request to be transmitted to Anne that she would dismiss him from her service; but whether the request ever reached her Majesty, or what effect it had upon her if it did reach her, we are not informed.†

It cannot indeed be denied that, as the Ministers had everything to fear from the inveterate Whiggism of George, their advantage lay in restoring James. That Bolingbroke would have lent his aid to a Restoration, had the project appeared to him a feasible one, can hardly be doubted. Seldom or never has this country been governed by a statesman in whose breast patriotism was so thoroughly subordinate to selfish ambition. Retention of power and office was all in all to him. But, in spite of any boastful promises he may have made in secret to Jacobite emissaries, he knew well his incapability of altering the succession to the crown established by law. Had not the nation shown continuously throughout this reign and in the most unmistakable manner its determination to be ruled only by a Protestant sovereign? Had not a clause importing attachment to the Protestant succession formed part of at least nineteen out of every twenty addresses presented to Anne, and whether the addresses came from Whig or Tory corporations? Did not the perpetual jealousies of her subjects on this head force Anne to repeat at every session of Parliament that her

* The Pretender, in a letter which he caused to be circulated among his adherents, expressed his determination not to change his religion. Many even of his staunchest friends seem from that time to have despaired of his cause.—Macpherson Papers.

† Mémoires de Berwick.

resolution to uphold the Act of Succession was unaltered? Had Bolingbroke emerged from an anchoret's cell where he had passed twenty years in devout contemplation, he might have tried to organize a design of bringing in the Pretender. But a little reflection should convince any one of the small probability that a Minister, who was thoroughly a man of the world, could be so utterly ignorant of the feelings of his countrymen as to imagine that the introduction of a few Jacobites into the highest offices of state would be sufficient for this purpose.

In a trial at law mere imputations as to design, however numerous may be the parties who make them, are held as of no value against the express denial of the defendant, unless some proof more convincing than mere allegations of opinion can be brought to support them. Now this is very nearly the case as between the Ministers and their accusers. In such of his correspondence at this period as remains to us, Bolingbroke, when writing to his most intimate friends, persons supposed to be in the plot with himself, frequently alludes to the rumour of a design to restore the Pretender as a stale device of the Whigs to excite hostility against himself and his colleagues.* In a letter to Sir William Wyndham, written some time afterwards, he declares his conviction that no scheme of the kind was ever entertained by the Ministers; and in a work published more than thirty years after the accession of George the statement is repeated. Bolingbroke had many faults, but want of frankness was certainly not one of them. He was too bold a man to fly for refuge to a falsehood. To us it seems that he could not keep his thoughts to himself, however much their publication would be likely to damage him. He could not refrain from informing the world of his disbelief in Christianity, although he must have known that his reputation would suffer for it so long as the majority of society was of another opinion.

But there is yet matter of a still more convincing nature. Soon after the death of Anne, several of her Ministers were set on their trial. The Whigs came forth eager to shed blood, and confident of being able to prove their accusations. Committees were appointed to investigate the conduct of the administration, and were composed of men so bitterly hostile to the accused as

* Prior, for instance, and the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, Phipps.

to leave no doubt that whatever discoveries were made would be laid before the world. The offices were ransacked for correspondence: every person from whom it was thought possible to elicit information was dragged to the bar and examined. At length, after months of research, the long-expected report made its appearance. To the disappointment of cruel men, it contained not an atom of evidence that a design of restoring the Pretender had ever been in contemplation.*

The truth is plain. The Protestant succession never was in the least danger, nor would it have been thought to be so had not the Whigs, for party purposes, been constantly sounding the alarm. But this digression has been rendered necessary by the circumstance that the silly tale as to the schemes of Anne's last Ministers has been handed down to our own times, and is still repeated as historical fact. It is impossible to enter far upon the examination of the annals of our country without perceiving that they are generally corrupted at the source. Almost every contemporary recorder of events has been either a hot Protestant or a zealous Whig. From the period of the Reformation down to that of the Revolution the principal object of writers was to abuse the Catholics, to dilate upon their wickedness, and to excite the indignation of society against them by imputing to them designs to subvert our religion. From the time of William to that of George III. the obstinacy and stupidity of the Tories were the favourite theme. The absence of any writer on the Catholic side admits of easy explanation. The tyranny of public opinion was complete. A book written to disprove the testimony of Protestants would not have been tolerated for a moment. If the author escaped the clutches of the civil power, he would have been in danger of being torn to pieces by the rabble. The Catholics were forced, therefore, to submit in silence, and to leave to the historian of a calmer age the duty of vindicating their reputation. But the fact that there is no counterpoise to the histories of Burnet, Oldmixon, Tindal, Boyer, and Cunningham cannot be accounted for so readily. That during the seventy years between William and George III. the Whigs were almost always in power, that

* I admit that we now have evidence as to the dealings of the Ministers with Jacobite agents which was unknown to the Whigs. But still there is no proof of any formed design to restore the Pretender.

authors were needy, and that money was only to be got by writing for the Government, may not be regarded as a satisfactory solution. The truth seems to be that the Whig party, although only a small minority of the nation, comprised nearly all the active and intelligent spirits in the country. Education, enough to enable a man to understand the bearings of a political question and to write a book, sufficed by itself to raise him above the dull and uninformed masses of Tory gentlemen who encumbered the benches of the House of Commons. We may not now consider the works of Oldmixon, for example, as indicating any high reach of mind. But if we compare Oldmixon with the general level of the society in which he lived, we shall find him towering a head and shoulders above the multitude.*

The antagonism of Oxford and Bolingbroke had been so conspicuous throughout the session as to leave no politician in doubt that changes would shortly be made in the administration. The decline of Oxford in the royal favour was not as yet publicly known; but those who had opportunities for observation might predict in which way the influence of Lady Masham would be exerted. It was to no purpose that the falling Minister continued to pay assiduous court to the favourite, and to plead the services he had rendered her Majesty. She turned upon him with bitter contempt: "You never did the Queen any service; you are incapable of doing her any." † Bolingbroke was in great hopes of being soon freed from his timid and dilatory colleague. His principal anxiety arose from the conduct of Shrewsbury, who seemed inclined to support his rival. There was no nobleman who stood so high as Shrewsbury in the estimation of Anne.

During eighteen days from the rising of Parliament, the town was kept in suspense. At one time the rumour went that the dismissal of Oxford had been pronounced. The next day it was reported that the changes in the public offices would be only trifling; and the next, that although the Treasurer would be dismissed, his fall would be softened by a pension of £4,000 a

* I must be careful to state that this reasoning is only intended to apply to the Tory party down to 1760.

† Erasmus Lewis to Swift, July 17. In another letter (July 6) he says, "The two ladies (Masham and the Duchess of Somerset) seem to have determined the fall of the dragon" (Oxford).

year and a dukedom.* Meanwhile the Minister had been frequently closeted with her Majesty, but the only result of his interviews seems to have been to convince him that a feeling of dislike, having once entered the royal mind, was irremovable, and only went on increasing. On the 27th of July he was summoned to Kensington to surrender his staff. Anne condescended to inform the Council of her reasons for parting with him. He neglected all business, she said. She could seldom understand him; and even when he was intelligible, she could place no dependence on what he said. He never came punctually at the times she appointed. When he did come, he was often tipsy, and behaved towards her with indecency and disrespect.† It is remarkable that in dismissing both the Prime Ministers of her reign the usually meek and good-natured Anne displayed a degree of rancour more in keeping with the character of Elizabeth than her own. Oxford bore his fall with more serenity of mind than Godolphin. He betook himself to a remedy which seems to be equally efficacious in assuaging the sorrows of despairing lovers and discarded statesmen. That same evening he despatched to Swift some very inharmonious lines he had composed, and evidently with no small effort, upon the ingratitude of princes.‡

The greater part of that night was employed by the Queen, in conjunction with her Council, in deliberating upon the choice of a successor to the vacant office. The reason why Bolingbroke, the person best fitted by abilities and experience for the post, was not selected, we are driven to conjecture. Either he could not be spared from the duties of the Secretaryship, or the Queen shrank from the intimacy into which she would have been forced with a man so immoral and ungodly; or Shrewsbury, whose advice had great weight with her, was averse to the appointment. It was determined to put the Treasury in commission. But the difficulty of finding five Tories of suffi-

* Correspondence of Swift with Charles Ford and Erasmus Lewis. "The dragon and his antagonist meet every day at the cabinet. They often eat and drink and walk together as if there was no sort of disagreement. And when they part I hear they give one another such names as nobody but Ministers of State could bear without cutting throats."

† Lewis to Swift, July 27.

‡ Oxford to Swift, July 27. He remarks that he had no power since 25th July, 1713.

cient standing and knowledge of business to undertake the work of the office proved quite insurmountable. The Members of the Council could not agree as to the selection, and the contention was warm. It was not until two in the morning of the 28th that the meeting broke up without having arrived at any resolution.*

It would seem, in truth, that Bolingbroke himself was convinced that the scheme he had cherished for years of forming a Tory administration virulently opposed to the Whigs, and determined upon rooting out the members of that party from every civil and military post in the kingdom, had now become utterly impracticable. There was not a statesman of reputation who could muster up sufficient courage to join him in the undertaking. Terror of the Whigs reigned supreme among the members of the Ministry and of the Council board. Had Oxford been a man of different spirit, and had the scheme been commenced in 1710, and carried through with vigour, the ascendancy of the Tory party would doubtless have been saved. But little time was now left for action. The aspect of the Queen was in itself sufficient warning that in a very brief interval he and everyone else who had been concerned in making the peace would be called to account by unscrupulous and merc'less enemies. He made one attempt to escape from his doom. Upon the same day that Oxford had his final audience with Anne, he entertained at dinner some of the leading Whigs—Stanhope, Craggs, Pulteney, and Walpole.† It is much to be regretted that no person who was present at the banquet should ever have furnished an account of the propositions made by the host; for some attempt at an arrangement there must surely have been. From the proceedings at the Council that night, however, it is evident that Bolingbroke left his guests in despair of being able to effect any compromise with them.

It had been arranged that the Council should meet again at Kensington on the 29th. But on the morning of that day

* Tindal; Oldmixon. Arbuthnot writes to Swift (August 12). "My dear mistress's days were numbered even in my imagination. But of that small number a great deal was cut off by the last troublesome scene of this contention among her servants."

† Lewis to Swift, July 29.

Anne was too unwell to attend to business, and the meeting was postponed to the 30th. The importunities to which she had been subjected during the past fortnight from Oxford, the embarrassment in which she found herself to fill his place, and the long hours during which she had forced herself to continue at the Council board, had very likely told with fatal effect upon her impaired constitution. An abscess in her leg, arising from erysipelas, having ceased its discharges, febrile symptoms set in. The treatment to which she was at once subjected was that absurd one of blood-letting, which continued even to our own times to destroy the chances of life in a feeble patient. On the morning of the 30th, however, she felt better, rose at her accustomed hour of seven, and prepared to meet her Council. She went up to the clock, but continued to stare at it so long that the bed-chamber woman in attendance asked her Majesty whether she saw anything unusual in its appearance. The Queen turned round, and the deadly pallor of her countenance so alarmed the attendant that she called for help. The physicians in waiting, one of whom was Dr. Arbuthnot, a man whose lively and ingenious satires have outlived his reputation for medical science, recommended that her head should be shaved. But, while this operation was performing, she was seized with a fit, which was considered to be apoplectic, and for nearly two hours lay perfectly insensible.*

Meanwhile the Council, in ignorance of what had passed at Kensington, had assembled at the Cockpit. While the members were deliberating a messenger despatched by the Duchess of Ormond hurried in and acquainted the Duke with the alarming situation of the Queen. The Council at once broke up, and the members repaired with all speed to the palace. There they re-assembled in the council-chamber, and summoned the physicians to make their report. Arbuthnot thought that the Queen's case, although undoubtedly most serious, was not altogether beyond hope. Two other doctors, Sir Richard Blackmore and Shadwell, gave it as their opinion that she would probably hold out until the next day. But Mead, a surly Whig, who looked on the Ministers as a pack of Jacobites, and who was delighted to have it in his power to throw them into con-

* Tindal; Oldmixon; Ford to Swift, July 31.

sternation, declared bluntly that she could not live two minutes.* The most celebrated physician of that age was not in attendance. John Radcliffe was then lying ill at Carshalton, slowly approaching the close of a long and distinguished career. His success in the treatment of small-pox and gout had been so extraordinary that the public imagination attributed to him something like a magical power over disease. To him indeed belongs the credit of having delivered the science of medicine from the trammels of some absurd errors of long standing. His uncourtly manners, however, and his habits of plain speaking and rough jesting had given offence to more than one great personage. Anne had, even before her accession, struck off his name from the list of her physicians, and had never since admitted him to her presence. Her friends had, however, frequently consulted him about her ailments, and it would seem that Lady Masham now sent to implore him to come and prescribe for her mistress. Had Radcliffe been able and disposed to accept the invitation, it is doubtful whether he could have reached Kensington in time to be of any service. He did not, however, stir from Carshalton, but contented himself with intimating his approval of the treatment adopted by Mead. A report became current immediately after the Queen's death that he had been summoned by the Council, and had returned a boorish refusal to exert his skill on behalf of his dying sovereign. The apprehension of being subjected to violence by the mob in consequence of this report is said to have embittered and shortened his few remaining days.†

From the reports of the physicians the Council could not but conclude that, in all human probability, the Queen had not many hours to live. It was at such a time of great importance that the highest ministerial post in the kingdom should be filled. It was hastily determined to abandon the design of putting the Treasury into commission. Bolingbroke turned to Shrewsbury, and proposed that he should undertake the office of Treasurer; and Shrewsbury, rising to a height of courage of which he had been till then thought incapable, agreed to accept it. As soon as Anne was sufficiently recovered, Bolingbroke

* Ford to Swift, July 31.

† Life of Radcliffe in the "Biographia Britannica."

approached her bedside, and stated that the Council was of opinion that it would be for the public service that Shrewsbury should be Lord Treasurer. Anne immediately consented, and gave the staff into the Duke's hand.* He thus became invested with an unprecedented accumulation of power; for in the emergency of the moment he retained his offices of Lord Chamberlain and Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.

Intelligence that the Queen had been struck with apoplexy spread quickly through London. Some of the leading Whigs, whose names were still retained on the list of councillors, but who had for some time forborn to use their privilege, hastened to Kensington, and made their way to the council-chamber. Among the first arrivals were the Dukes of Somerset and Argyle; and in the afternoon Somers mustered up sufficient strength to appear. The Council continued to sit throughout the day and all through the succeeding night, the members taking turns to go out and refresh themselves. The Whigs flocked in until their numbers gave them a very decided preponderance at the board, and a variety of orders was issued to insure the tranquillity of the metropolis and the peaceable succession of George. The state of Portsmouth was one of the first subjects taken into consideration. A report, it seems, had been recently sent to the Ministers by Sir John Gibson, the governor, with intelligence of an armament preparing at Havre, and praying for reinforcements of troops, artillery, stores, and provisions. But the report had been neglected by Ministers, whose whole time was taken up in quarrelling with each other, and who, if they gave any consideration to it at all, probably set down the rumour of an expedition preparing in France against this island as a very idle one. Orders were now sent, not without some sharp reflections upon the remissness of those in power, that a regiment should march instantly to Portsmouth. Directions were at the same time despatched to four cavalry regiments quartered in distant counties to march up to London. The guard of the Tower was tripled, and the trained bands of the City were called out. A general officer

* Ford to Swift, July 31. In another letter of August 5 he says, "The Whigs were not in council when Shrewsbury was recommended. Lord Bolingbroke proposed it there, as well as to the Queen." The ordinary narrative is that Somerset and Argyle proposed Shrewsbury.

was sent to Scotland to place the forces of that kingdom in condition for action; a messenger was despatched to Flanders to require the immediate return of most of the troops which still remained on the Continent; and Craggs the younger departed for Hanover with instructions to pass through the Hague on his road, and bid Strafford summon the States-general to make ready to fulfil their guarantee of the Protestant succession if occasion should arise for their assistance. An embargo, a customary precaution at times of public danger, was laid upon all the shipping in British ports.

The City, meanwhile, had been agitated by the usual variety of reports. The Pretender was on the seas with a French armament. The wild Irish were crossing St. George's Channel. The savage clans of the Highlands were assembling for a march into England. But towards noon on Saturday, the 31st, it became distinctly known that Shrewsbury had been appointed Treasurer, and that the Council was thronged with undoubted friends to the Protestant succession. The funds, upon this cheering intelligence, recovered three per cent. at a bound.

The morning of the 31st found Anne in a lethargic state, and evidently drawing near her end. The Council, which had adjourned for a brief interval, again assembled at eight. Kryenburg, the Hanoverian resident, was summoned to attend with the black box which contained the instrument by which the Electoral family nominated such persons as they chose to act as Lords Justices of the realm in addition to the seven great officers of the departed sovereign. The heralds were directed to be in readiness for proclaiming the new king.*

Throughout the day and the succeeding night Anne appears to have remained in a state of complete unconsciousness. The Bishop of London remained in the apartment, hoping that a lucid interval might afford him an opportunity of administering the sacrament; but no such opportunity came. Her will, directing that her remains should be deposited in the same

* I have compiled this narrative of Anne's last hours almost entirely from the letters of Ford and Lewis to Swift. Both were so placed as to be able to obtain the most correct information, and they wrote at the time. I have rejected many statements in Tindal, Oldmixon, and Lamberty as mere emanations of Whig malice.

vault with Prince George, and bequeathing legacies to some of her servants, lay unsigned by her bedside.* The accounts of her dying hours, her ravings about her brother, and the story of her charging the Bishop with some commission on his behalf, rest on no competent authority, and may be dismissed as mere inventions. It was firmly rooted in the public mind that Anne cherished a warm affection for her brother, and that, whatever she might be compelled to say to the Parliament, she was secretly anxious for his succession. Both Whigs and Jacobites had, from opposite motives, assisted to spread this delusion. It is not strange, therefore, that there should have been a large manufacture of reports seasoned to the public taste, and sure to be welcomed with greedy credulity.† But that Anne was troubled on her death-bed by remorse or anxiety about her brother, no one who calmly considers the circumstances will think likely. Let it be remembered that she had never seen him. At his birth she had, in common with the whole nation, laughed to scorn the notion that he was her father's child; and not a word of hers has been recorded by any person who had any degree of intimacy with her which might seem to indicate that she had changed her opinion. For nearly a quarter of a century the Duchess of Marlborough was the friend of her bosom and the chief repository of her thoughts. In 1742 that lady chose to publish a volume concerning her relations with Anne. The twenty-eight years which had elapsed since the death of her old friend and mistress, the substantial benefits which she was still enjoying from her benevolence, had done nothing to soften the resentment with which she looked back on her dismissal in 1711. The work, indeed, was composed in a frame of mind so spiteful that, had her Grace been able to charge Anne with a wish to alter the law of succession established by Parliament, she would most certainly have done it. But there is not a line from which it can be inferred that her Majesty entertained even the slightest affection for the Pretender. The Duchess was succeeded in the office of confidant

* Tindal; Arbuthnot to Swift, August 14.

† See the narrative in Lamberty, who says he had his information from the Hanoverian Secretary Guteky, "et sur d'autres avis et notions sûres et de source." As he did not publish his narrative till twenty-two years afterwards, he might have ventured to give the names of these other informants.

by Lady Masham. Lady Masham was the intimate friend of Swift; and when the latter declares that to his certain knowledge the Queen hated and despised the Pretender, it is but reasonable to assume that his authority was the royal favourite. A year after the death of Anne, Swift writes, "Whoever knew anything of the Queen's disposition must believe that she had no inclinations at all in favour of the Pretender. She was highly and publicly displeased with my Lord Bolingbroke because he was seen under the same roof with that person at the opera when his lordship was sent to France. Her Majesty said that he ought immediately to have withdrawn upon the appearance of the other. And at her toilet among her women, when mention happened to be made of the Chevalier, she would frequently let fall expressions of such a nature as made it manifest how little she deserved those reproaches which had been cast upon her on that account since her death."* Now, when it is remembered that Swift was the close friend and correspondent of Lady Masham, the Duchess of Ormond, the Duke of Ormond, Oxford, Bolingbroke, and the royal physician Arbuthnot, all persons in constant attendance upon the Queen, and all of them near her in her last hours, we are forced to choose between two alternatives. Either the Dean was a liar of extraordinary audacity, or his testimony must be allowed to outweigh reports which cannot be traced to any source.

A few minutes after seven on the morning of Sunday, the 1st of August, Anne drew her last breath. The antechambers of the palace were crowded with privy councillors. Everything was prepared for inaugurating the new reign. Kryenburg was in waiting with the black box. The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Lord Chancellor, with whom had been deposited duplicates of the commission, were also in attendance. The names of eighteen noblemen appointed to act as regents in conjunction with the seven highest functionaries of the realm were now read aloud. The list excited some surprise. Although but recently revised, it was not composed so exclusively of Whigs as had been expected. It comprised five Tories who had publicly signified their approbation of the peace, and had joined in the address which pronounced it safe, honourable, and advan-

* Inquiry into the Behaviour of the Queen's Last Ministry.

tageous. On the other hand, the omission of some illustrious names gave rise to much speculation. Neither Marlborough, nor his son-in-law Sunderland, nor Somers, nor Wharton was mentioned. Why the honour of being one of the conservators of a throne he had laboured so diligently to establish was not accorded to the hero, has never been conclusively explained. It has been argued that he was abroad when the list was framed; that he had offended George by keeping from him the secret of the campaign of 1708, and by paying his chief court to the Electress Sophia; that tales had reached Hanover of his dealings with the Pretender. But a glance at the list of names suggests another reason for his exclusion. It comprised no one who was personally disagreeable to Anne, and whose introduction might have been interpreted as a slight to her memory.*

During the morning a proclamation notifying the death of Anne and the accession of George, Elector of Brunswick-Lunenburg, to the throne, was signed by upwards of a hundred persons—peers, privy-councillors, members of Parliament, civic dignitaries. It is interesting to observe in the list the names of Mar, Ormond, and Bolingbroke, whom ambition, petulance, or persecution afterwards drove into the service of the Pretender. In the afternoon the proclamation was read by the heralds with the usual solemnities and at the usual points of London and Westminster. The carriages of the regents, the Ministers, and the principal personages of the kingdom formed a long procession; and a vast crowd signified by acclamations its approbation of the proceedings. Not a single Jacobite presumed to lift up his voice. All London, it seems, after having been disquieted for years with the terror of a disputed succession, was surprised, when the critical moment came, to find itself perfectly unanimous upon this subject. The people, however, signified with their accustomed candour their disapproval of the conduct and supposed designs of some of the late Ministers. Oxford was unmercifully hissed, and halters were flung into his carriage. In the evening a most innocent nobleman, Lord Bingley, who had been appointed ambassador to the Court of Spain, underwent a beating for him by mistake.

* Coxe offers no explanation of Marlborough's omission from the list of regents.

Bolingbroke, whose name was less known to the public, met with a somewhat motley reception. But Ormond was enthusiastically cheered. Neither his connection with the Ministry nor the inglorious part he had played in Flanders had availed to diminish his popularity. People seem to have done him the honour of regarding him as a mere tool in the hands of a wicked faction, and were not a little indignant that such a worthy nobleman, the owner of a name so illustrious, should have been imposed upon so foully.*

The funeral took place on the night of the 24th of August. It was conducted with that pomp with which the sovereigns of this country are usually consigned to the tomb. The Duchess of Somerset, as first lady of honour, was the chief mourner; and there was a large attendance of peers and peeresses, privy-councillors and judges. The remains of Anne were deposited in a vault on the south side of Henry VII.'s Chapel in Westminster Abbey. The good Queen reposes beside her uncle Charles II., her brother-in-law William III., her sister Mary, and her husband Prince George.†

Her life had been far from happy. She was thoroughly unfortunate in all her domestic relations. As a daughter she had been forced to choose between her conscience on the subject of religion and her filial duty, and to bear a part in dethroning her father. During the reign of Mary the pleasant intercourse which might have subsisted between two amiable sisters was constantly interrupted by petty jealousies and quarrels fomented by interested partisans. No lady was ever more in need of an affectionate and intelligent husband; but fortune allotted to her not only an uncompanionable simpleton, but a weak and ailing creature who required constant nursing. But it was as a mother that the sorrows of Anne were multiplied beyond ordinary measure. We can conceive no affliction so desolating to the heart of a woman as to undergo the pangs of maternity without being rewarded by that joy which effaces the remembrance of suffering. Yet again and again had she to bear this dreadful disappointment. One child, as if by a refinement of cruelty, was spared for nine years and then snatched from her embraces.

* Ford to Swift, August 5. † Lettres Historiques.

Nature, by providing Anne with an affectionate heart and a feeble understanding, had predestined her to vassalage of some kind. In default of a husband capable of asserting his empire, she fell under the power of a female tyrant, haughty, avaricious, ungrateful, and perfectly callous to the feelings of others. Whatever amount of pleasure Anne may have derived from the society of Sarah Jennings was more than counterbalanced by the misery she endured from the Duchess of Marlborough. Yet many years elapsed before the timid and vacillating Queen could summon up sufficient courage to escape from that wretched bondage. The influence of her next favourite led to vast consequences to Europe; and it may still be a fair field for argument whether, as regarded the interests of this country, that influence was exerted for good or for evil. But Abigail Hill was at least an attached and considerate servant; and it is probable that from her sympathy Anne derived the chief comfort of her reign. As a sovereign she was still unfortunate. A person born to rule over millions, and possessing a very small share of intellect and a very sensitive conscience, can seldom be happy for long together. She was a Tory, and imagined, with probably a great many kitchen-wenches in her dominions, that the Whigs were a party who wanted to destroy the Church. Her Ministers perceived that, if the war was to be carried on with proper spirit, it was absolutely necessary to make some sacrifices to that party. For years were they endeavouring to force in one direction a conscience which nature and early education had obstinately fixed in another. The patient endured unspeakable agony before she roused up and flung aside her tormentors. Yet she was little less unhappy with the new set of Ministers by whose advice she governed. The disappointed Whigs allowed her no rest. They were always moving something in the Parliament to embarrass and plague her. They were constantly sending messages to the Electoral family to come over and set up a standard of disaffection among her subjects. She found that she had been deceived in the man whom she had made the principal repository of her confidence. Now that he was a Minister he had grown lazy. When he was sober it was not easy to find out what he meant, and when he was drunk he was not only unintelligible but wanting in proper

respect. Both he and his colleagues, in fact, seemed to be more fond of quarrelling with each other than attending to business. It was all one scene of wretchedness and misfortune from the cradle to the grave. "Never, I believe," said Arbuthnot, "was sleep more welcome to a weary traveller than death was to her."

Her popularity with all classes of her subjects was extraordinary. No sovereign, except the amiable and highly-gifted lady who now occupies the throne, has been so universally and constantly beloved. It may be conjectured that this popularity arose less from the mild and benevolent character of Anne than from other causes. Whether it proceeds from some inherent chivalrousness of sentiment in the Anglo-Saxon nature, female sovereigns have, as a rule, been extremely popular in this country. There has been little disaffection, even under the provocation of great abuses, during their reigns. But the most apparent reason of Anne's popularity is that her mind happened to be exactly in harmony with the minds of nineteen-twentieths of the people she governed. She was known to be strongly attached to the Church; and solicitude for the Church was in her time paramount in the thoughts of her subjects. The elections of 1710 showed how deeply seated was this feeling. The nation was then engaged in a great war. It must have been admitted that a Tory Parliament was far less likely to sustain the honour and reputation of our arms than a Whig one. Yet anxiety for the Church rose above all other considerations, and a Tory Parliament was returned. It is customary to this nation, as to many other nations, by affixing some adjective or substantive to the name of a sovereign, to record the impression that sovereign has left upon their minds. Henry I. was distinguished as the "scholar." Richard III. was dismissed with the contemptuous appellation of "crook-back." Henry VIII. escaped with no greater censure than that of being "bluff." His daughter Mary was consigned to everlasting infamy by the word "bloody." Elizabeth was held as "glorious." The compassion or regrets of the nation for the misfortunes of Charles I. are signified in the title of "martyr." The love which the English bore to Queen Anne is touchingly displayed in the prefix of "good."

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